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X. A. v. E. Kretschmar.

POPULAR

LEGENDS OF BRITTANY.

AN

ENGLISH VERSION

OF

^u
SONVESTRE'S "FOYER BRETON,"

FROM

A GERMAN TRANSLATION BY HEINRICH BODE.

BY A LADY.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,

111 WASHINGTON STREET.

1854.

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PREFACE

BY

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR.



“DEAR aunt, do read us another story out of the little German book!” is a petition delivered in a most coaxing way, that often meets my ear, and one that is not easily resisted. But it is a little laborious to *read* a foreign language into one’s mother-tongue, unless one is gifted with more fluency than myself, and therefore, though I have always found my little hungry auditors extremely willing to overlook all defects in these improvised translations, I have sometimes put them off by promising to write out these favorite tales of theirs into plain English, and get them printed, so that they may have the satisfaction of reading them themselves. And now, according to my promise, I dedicate this my translation, imperfect and ill executed as it may be, to

all my dearly loved nephews and nieces, with the hope that it may have as much power to amuse and entertain them, as it has had to beguile many a weary hour of feeble health, while accompanying the German translator through enchanted forests, wizard caves, and magic circles.

PREFACE

BY

THE GERMAN TRANSLATOR.*

GOODY MÄHRCHEN† is a dear, familiar guest, much beloved by old and young, because she tells things in a very pretty way, and she knows about things that mortals have never dreamed of. She makes long journeys, and roams all about the world, to bring home something

* The *Mährchen* or legends of which I have here made a collection are taken from Sonvestre's "Foyer Breton" (Fireside Tales of Brittany). As I consider it of no small importance that stories of this kind, which have a very wide circle of readers among the young folks, should be so framed as to be free from every thing positively outlandish, in trying to narrate them after our own country fashion, I have found it necessary to make several, and some quite considerable alterations, for which I hardly feel authorized to make Sonvestre answerable, though the original plan of each story has been adhered to as closely as its adaptation to our readers would allow, and we can assure those readers, that in these alterations the stories themselves have lost nothing of their distinctive national character. — NOTE BY THE GERMAN TRANSLATOR.

† *Mährchen* is a German word, signifying *tale* or *legend*.

new, which she knows how to dish up after her own fashion; and then, when the grandmother says, "Mährchen has come again, and has brought some very pretty stories," the children all jump for joy, and crowd round to hear what she has to say.

Mährchen *has* now come again, and this time she has come a long, *long* way, — she has come from Brittany, where many clever, honest people live, and it is so far off, that you have to go all through France to get to it.* Well, she has brought home some stories, — stories that I assure you are well worth listening to, and that nobody is ever tired of hearing. I have written them down for you, so that you may read them yourselves, or coax grandmother to read them to you; but once for all, I charge you, give good heed, for Mährchen often teaches many a wise lesson, and if you pay attention to what she says, you will not have to learn the same things out of other books, which would be much harder to read, and would not give you half so much pleasure.

Now then, read, and pay strict attention.

* It will be remembered that this is addressed to German children.

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JOHNNY REDBREAST.

ONCE on a time, before the stones of which the oldest churches are built were yet quarried, there lived in a certain village a poor widow, named Lisbeth.

Her father was a rich and respectable man, who, when he died, left a house and a good deal of landed property, a mill and a bakery, twelve horses and twice as many oxen, twelve cows and six times as many sheep, to say nothing of the corn and the flax.

But Lisbeth's brothers wronged her out of her share of the inheritance. The oldest took the house, the lands, and the cows; the second took the mill and the horses; and the third seized upon the oxen, the bakery, and the sheep.

So then there was nothing left for Lisbeth but

a miserable hut, in a moor, just out of the village, which had been used for sick cattle. While she was removing the few things she possessed into this wretched place, her youngest brother said to her: —

“Now, Lisbeth, you shall see that I have a true, brotherly heart. I have a black cow that brings me in nothing, and gives hardly a saucer-full of milk; take her with you, I give her to you. Weissdörnchen can lead her by a rope.”

Weissdörnchen was the widow's daughter, a little girl of eleven years of age. Her face was as fair as the thorn-blossoms, and on this account she was called Weissdörnchen (Little White Thorn).

Weissdörnchen took the meagre black cow by an old rope, and thus Lisbeth and her daughter jogged along to the cow-house.

All day long, Weissdörnchen tended the black cow, which, browsing among the stones with which the moor was covered, could hardly find enough to satisfy her hunger; the little girl, in the mean time, amusing herself by plucking flowers, and tying them into little nosegays, and then planting them in the earth.



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One day, as Weissdörnchen was binding nose-gays of pretty daisies, there came a little bird, which perched on one of the little flower-bunches she had stuck in the ground, and began to twitter, and move his little head about, as if he wanted to talk to the little girl.

Weissdörnchen wondered greatly at this. She stepped softly up to the bird, and held her ear close down to listen. But she could understand nothing. The bird tried to chirp louder, and still louder, it beat its wings, and hopped round before her, but Weissdörnchen could not understand all this in the least. But it gave her so much pleasure to see and listen to the little bird, that she did not see it was evening. At last the bird flew away. As she looked after him to see whither he flew, she saw the stars in the sky.

Swiftly she hastened to seek the black cow, but she was not to be found upon the moor. Weissdörnchen shouted with all her might, she ran about over the whole moor, and she even climbed up into the hollows among the rocks, where the rain-water had formed little ponds; but in vain, the cow had vanished.

At last, she heard the voice of her mother call-

ing her, who was fearful that something had befallen her. Sadly Weissdörnchen ran in the direction of the voice, and as she went along the path which led to the hut, she found her mother, and near her the beloved black cow, torn in pieces by wolves. Nothing remained but the horns and the bones.

When Weissdörnchen saw this, she was horror-struck, for she had grown very fond of the cow while tending her on the moor. She threw herself on the ground and gathered up the bones.

The widow took her child by the hand, and tried to console her. "You do wrong to lament for the cow as if she were a human being. For even though wicked people and wolves be against us, yet Heaven is for us. Help me up with my bundle of heath, and come with me to the hut."

Weissdörnchen obeyed, but at each step a sigh escaped her, and big tears rolled, one after another, down her cheeks.

"Poor Blackey!" thought she, "poor Blackey! You were so gentle to lead, so easily satisfied with any kind of fodder, and you had already grown so nice and plump!"

She could eat nothing at supper-time, and she

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waked many times in the night, thinking she heard the black cow lowing at the door.

The next morning she rose up before day, and, undressed and barefooted, ran out into the moor. When she got out of doors, she found there the same little bird, perched just as he had been the day before on one of the nosegays she had planted in the ground, and he sang anew, and seemed to be calling her.

Alas! she could understand him now as little as yesterday, and feeling quite vexed, she was just going to run away, when she saw something shining on the ground, that looked like a gold piece. She turned it over with her foot, it was nothing but a blossom of the yellow groundsel. But no sooner had she touched it, than she understood at once the language of the little bird,* which cried out to her, "Weissdörnchen, I am disposed to befriend you; listen to me."

* It is an old and very prevalent superstition, that if one who has never committed a crime will go out, *en chemise* and barefoot, and break off a flower of the groundsel, he will be able to understand the speech of all animals.

“Who are you?” asked Weissdörnchen, much astonished that she could understand other than human language.

“I am Johnny Redbreast,” answered the bird. “I have it in my power, every year, to make one good poor child happy, and this time it is to be you.”

“Is that true, Johnny Redbreast?” cried Weissdörnchen, delighted. “Shall I have a little silver cross to wear round my neck, and not have to go barefoot any more, but have wooden shoes to walk in?”

“You shall have a golden chain, and wear silken shoes like a grand lady,” replied Johnny Redbreast.

“And how is that to be brought about, my dear little bird?”

“Follow me whither I lead you.”

Weissdörnchen was all ready to follow Johnny wherever he might lead her. Away they went, over the moor, across stony fields, and through wastes overgrown with thistles, till they came to the sea, where lay the Seven Islands. Here Johnny Redbreast stayed his flight, and said to the little girl:—

“Do you see any thing on the sands by the sea-shore? There, right before you!”

“O yes!” answered Weissdörnchen, “I see great sabots of red beech-wood that have never been scorched at the fire, and a stick of holly which no sickle has ever touched.”

“Put on the shoes, and take the little staff in your hand.”

“I have done so.”

“Now go through the water, till you come to the first island; then go round till you come to a rock on which grow sea-green rushes.”

“And what then?”

“Gather some of the rushes, and make a rope out of them.”

“I will do so.”

“Then you are to knock with the little staff upon the rock, a cow will come out, you will secure her with the rope of rushes, and lead her to your mother, to console her for the loss of the black cow.”

Weissdörnchen followed all these directions. She waded through the water, wove a rope of rushes, knocked on the rock, and out came a cow with an eye as mild as a spaniel's, and a

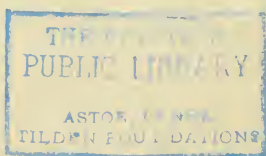
skin as soft and sleek as a mole's; her full, white teats hung down to the ground.

Weissdörnchen led the cow to the hut of her mother, who was now as much overjoyed as she had previously been cast down.

But what was her astonishment when she came to milk Little Sea-cow! (for that was the name Weissdörnchen had given her). The milk ran between her fingers without cessation, like the water of a fountain.

Lisbeth filled all the basins in the house, then the pails and the tubs; still the milk continued to pour. "O Heaven!" cried the widow, "this is a clear miracle!" Little Sea-cow continued to give milk, and it was more than was needed for all the inhabitants of the place. Her fame soon spread abroad, and many a one came to see the cow, and to get some of her milk, for it was richer and sweeter than any other.

The richest farmers wanted to buy her, and each one that came offered more than the last. At length, the oldest brother came, and said, "You ought to consider that I am your brother, and therefore let me have the cow rather than any one else. Give me Little Sea-cow, and you shall have all my cows for her."



Lisbeth answered, "Little Sea-cow is more valuable than all the cows in the country, and I can supply all the markets with her milk."

"Well, but let me have her, dear sister," he answered; "I will give our father's house, in which you were born, together with the lands, the horses and wagon."

This offer Lisbeth accepted.

She was conveyed to the house, where she turned over a clod of earth, drank from the spring, made a fire on the hearth, and cut a tuft of hair from the horse's tail, in token that every thing now belonged to her. Then she delivered up Little Sea-cow to her brother, who went with her a long, long way off.

Weissdörnchen wept when she saw the cow driven away. When evening came, she went out into the stalls to see that all was right, and as she looked about, she said to herself, "Ah! why is not Little Sea-cow here? When shall I see my Little Sea-cow again?"

She had hardly done speaking when she heard the lowing of a cow close beside her. And because she had touched the yellow groundsel, and thereby could understand the language of all

animals, she listened as the voice said, "Here am I, my dear Weissdörnchen."

Utterly astounded, she looked around, and beheld Little Sea-cow!

"Ah! is it you? Pray who brought you back?"

"I could not stay with your uncle," answered Little Sea-cow, "because I cannot belong to any body that is not good; for this reason, I have come back to you of my own accord."

"But then my mother will have to give back the house, farm, and cattle," said Weissdörnchen.

"No," said the cow, "because he deprived you of them in a very unjust manner."

"But he will come again and recognize you."

"Go and bring me three milkwort blossoms."

Weissdörnchen brought the three milkwort flowers, and while the cow was eating them, she was bid to call out three times, "Johnny Red-breast!"

When she had called the third time, the cow was all at once changed into a beautiful horse! Weissdörnchen was astonished.

"Now, my uncle will never know you again," said she, "and instead of Little Sea-cow, I shall call you Little Sea-horse."

The widow was full of joy when she learned what had happened. The next day she took out the horse to carry some corn to market. But think of her astonishment, when, the more she laid upon the horse, the broader grew his back, and this one horse could carry more than all the horses in the place!

This was soon noised about, and now came the other brother and begged his sister to sell him the horse. This she refused to do until he offered for it his horses, his mill, and all the swine that he was fattening.

Then the widow consented to part with the horse, and took possession of the mill.

But at evening, things went on just as before. Little Sea-horse was again in his stall; Weissdörnchen brought three milkwort flowers, gave them to the horse, and when she had called Johnny Redbreast for the third time, the horse changed into a sheep, which she named "Little Sea-sheep." The sheep had wool as long as hemp, white as linen, and fine as silk.

The widow came to witness the new wonder, and when she had looked at the sheep, she said to Weissdörnchen, "Go and get the great sheep-

shears, for this sheep has more wool than it can carry."

But as she sheared the sheep, the wool immediately grew again, just as long as it was before she cut it, and Lisbeth perceived that Little Sea-sheep was worth more than all the sheep in the whole country.

The third brother came that way accidentally, saw how things were, and immediately exchanged his bakery, sheep, and oxen for Little Sea-sheep.

But as he was driving it away, he passed by the sea-shore, near the Seven Islands; there, Little Sea-sheep rushed into the water, swam across to the first island, and vanished in the rock covered with sea-green rushes, which opened and immediately closed behind him.

At evening Weissdörnchen waited in vain for Little Sea-sheep: night came, and the next morning, but no Little Sea-sheep.

Sadly roamed Weissdörnchen over the moor. There she found Johnny Redbreast sitting, who said to her, "I have been waiting for you, my dear Weissdörnchen. Little Sea-sheep is gone, and will never come again. Your uncles are

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justly punished for their avarice and dishonesty, and you are now rich enough to wear a golden chain and silken shoes. I have nothing more to do here. Always remember that you have been poor, and remain as good as you are pretty."

With these words, Johnny Redbreast flew away, and never showed himself again.

Weissdörnchen grew up tall and handsome. She *did* remain good and tender-hearted, always sympathizing with the needy and suffering, and taking a particular interest in all poor children; and all who knew her loved her.

ORIGIN OF THE BAT.

It is a sad thing to make a promise without thinking beforehand whether we can fulfil it or not. In such a case, it is not every one who gets off so well as Tina, the heroine of our tale; for even if there are now-a-days no evil sprites to haunt and torment the faithless one, there are always plenty of other people to look sour at him, and at any rate his good name and his conscience must suffer from his delinquency.

Tina was a pretty girl; she was called the greatest beauty of the six neighboring villages, and all the village lads were striving for her favor. But Tina was a trifle haughty, and prided herself rather too much upon her beauty; one was not handsome enough for her, and another was not rich enough; one was too young,

and another too old; in short, she had some objection to them all.

At length a nobleman, from a fashionable city near by, made his appearance. He saw Tina, and was dazzled by her beauty. Of what use was it for him to say to himself, "I am a nobleman, and she only a peasant-girl!" Of what use was it for him to go away, and travel the wide world over, to drive away all thoughts of Tina! Love mounts like the waters of the sea, and submerges its victim, head and ears. Counsel was of no avail, he must see Tina again. Tina received him as if he had been his Reverence, the parish priest. She set before him the finest wheat-bread, and the most delicious wine, and the nobleman asked her if she would be his bride. Tina gladly said, "Yes"; she longed to be a great lady, and wear silken dresses, as she had seen them do at the Castle. Alan, that was the nobleman's name, gave her a ring, and Tina promised to love him always. So every Sunday they went together to church, and when the services were over, they used to walk together, both in the evenings and at other times; when, one day, a man appeared with two splen-

did horses, and announced to Alan, that, if he would once more see his brother living, he must hasten to him immediately. Alan promised constancy to his bride, and Tina swore by all that was dear, that, should she ever think of another, all the curses that could be thought of might light upon her head.

So the young nobleman quietly went off on his journey to his dying brother. Tina wept bitterly: but fearful that her tears might spoil her beautiful eyes, she wiped them away, but she still felt very sad. So, to drive away her sadness, she would sing little songs as she went about the house. By degrees her melancholy was entirely dissipated, and she recovered all her former gayety.

So long as Alan stood in the way, the young villagers had kept aloof. But the young nobleman was no sooner gone, than they came as before, and vied with each other in their gallant attentions. Tina accepted their courtesies, and one who knew nothing of her affairs would have supposed that matters stood just as they did before the advent of the young nobleman. To one she gave her horse to hold, to another she hand-

ed her party-colored, carved riding-switch, and she allowed a third to steal from her pocket the nuts the baker's little daughter had given her. In this way, all the young fellows were on excellent terms with her, though in fact no one was any more favored than another; for Tina made use of them all, and when she had got what she wanted from any one of them, she never scrupled to dismiss him with contempt, and call him a Tom Fool into the bargain! Alan had promised to return in three months, with heart unchanged; but a long time had already elapsed, and no news had been received from him, when St. John's day came. St. John's day is a famous festival. Bonfires are then kindled at night-fall, and all the young men and maidens over sixteen years of age assemble for games and dancing. Tina, of course, did not fail to grace the occasion.

The fête was held on a broad, open meadow, not far from the Zwerglöcher, where the wicked Kobolde or imps of darkness celebrate their wild orgies. All the girls wore the blue flax-blossoms in their bodices, and the lads green branches in their hats. Before the dancing began, each

young man took his betrothed by the hand, and, in long rows, all proceeded to the *Big Stone*, a rock which separated the *Zwerglöcher* from the meadow. Here they laid down their rustic ornaments, the bridegroom placing his sprig of green beside the flowers of his bride. He or she who had not broken his or her plighted troth was sure to find twig or flower as green and fresh as when first placed there.

Tina passed on with the others, her ring of betrothal on her finger, and the flax-flowers on her breast, when, as the train approached the *Big Stone*, she observed close at her side a young man dressed in mourning, an entire stranger to her, who offered her his hand.

"Pardon! noble sir," said Tina, "I never saw you before, and I do not know what you want."

"I beg permission," said the stranger, "to place a green twig beside your little nosegay of flax-blossoms."

Tina laughed aloud. "Ma foi!" she exclaimed, "who does not know that I am Alan's bride? Your lordship must have heard from gray-haired old men, that there are three impossibilities,—to uproot the forests, level the moun-

tains, and move the rocks; but now there is one more to be added to the list, and that is just what your lordship asks for."

The stranger said no more. He merely asked her hand for the dance; but after the first round, perceiving that his courtesy afforded Tina pleasure, he continued: "If you will not allow me to place a green sprig beside your nosegay, I can lay a silver sprig on the Big Stone, for my father has left me property enough to keep three carriages and three pairs of horses."

"Alan is just as rich, and refuses me nothing," answered Tina.

After they had danced round a couple of times more, the stranger began again: "Besides the legacy of my father, my mother has left me two forests, that employ twelve coal-burners, and ever so many people making wooden shoes."

"I must not hear a word about it," said Tina, and her heart was no longer quiet.

They danced another dance, and then the nobleman said, "I have only told you of my landed property; but my uncle left me meadows, where every year a hundred bullocks and just as many colts are driven to pasture. To the silver

and golden branch, I could also add a sprig of diamonds."

This time Tina exclaimed, "Silence! I dare not listen to you."

The nobleman continued to enumerate what he would give to his bride. She should have a dress such as no mantuamaker on earth could make, a palace such as no other human being could inhabit, and there she should be like one of the greatest queens. Promises like these were more than Tina could withstand.

She gave the nobleman the little bunch of flax-blossoms, together with the ring that Alan had given her. And as night closed in, she suffered him to lead her away from the meadow, to the dwelling he had promised her. The farther they went, the darker grew the sky. The road stretched far away before them, and one little star disappeared after another, till it was very dark. Nothing was heard but a kind of moaning noise in the distance, which Tina thought was the cry of the screech-owl. Then she grew anxious, and said to her conductor, "We have come a long way, and yet I see nothing but a low wall that looks as if it belonged to a churchyard."

“It is the court-yard that leads to my residence,” answered the nobleman.

Tina passed through the stone gate, then she stopped short, and said: “I see a cross there, such as there is on the highway where a murderer is buried.”

“That is the weathercock on my roof,” replied the stranger.

Tina went on a little piece, then she stopped again. “It looks exactly as if down at our feet was some abandoned stone-quarry, or pit, where they throw dead dogs or horses.”

“That is the entrance of our house,” said her companion. With these words, he seized Tina in his arms, and bore her with him down into the pit. She had no sooner touched the bottom, than the moon broke through the clouds, and instead of the nobleman in silken attire, Tina beheld a skeleton!

Horror-struck, she sank on her knees, and cried for mercy.

The skeleton answered, “Pray, why do you shriek! I am Alan, your bridegroom. As I was returning to you, to celebrate our nuptials, some vagrant wretches fell upon me, strangled me

with the rope you see about my neck, and threw me into a pit. My longing for you was so great as to leave me no peace even in death. I came to you in the form of a stranger, and since you suffered yourself to be beguiled by a stranger into faithlessness to your bridegroom, I will now give you what I promised you, — a robe of earth and turf, such as no mantuamaker can make, a dwelling in the damp grave, such as no living person inhabits, and a rank which the greatest queens share with you as soon as they die. Give me your hand, dearest bride, and lie down beside me, for the hour is come when I must go back to the dead.”

At these words, the skeleton bound one end of the rope which was around his neck around the neck of the maiden, with a slip-knot such as no mortal hand could loosen.

Tina passed the whole night on her knees beside the skeleton, almost dead with fright, and weeping bitterly. Towards morning, she thought she felt something move at her feet. She looked round and spied a field-mouse, staring fixedly at her.

Almost at the same moment a black point ap-

peared over the grave, and a fluttering of wings soon made her sensible of the presence of a great black raven, which settled upon a withered branch, a few steps from her. Raven and Field-mouse were a wicked wizard and a wicked witch who fed upon dead bodies. They saluted each other.

“Well, gossip,” cried the Raven, “we are met in a lucky hour. I suppose you are selecting out the dainty bit of the pretty maiden, that you are to eat first.”

“Ah!” said the Field-mouse, “if it were only not forbidden to touch living flesh.”

“Bah!” said the Raven, “we ’ll wait here till this dear little creature becomes dead flesh.”

“Good!” said the Field-mouse, “but I speak for the pretty little cheek.”

“And I bargain for the fresh lips,” said the jet black Raven.

“I ’ll gnaw out the fine large eyes,” said the Field-mouse.

“And I ’ll hack off the tender little ears.”

This conversation froze the blood in our Tina’s veins. However, she mustered courage to say, “I am too young and too little to satisfy you

both : ah ! I believe it would be more to your advantage to rescue me."

"Rescue you !" cried wizard and witch at once, "how could *we* do that ?"

"O, you could do it well enough if the Field-mouse would gnaw the rope, and you, Raven, would fly with me out of this pit."

"And what will you give us if we will do it ?" inquired both the cannibals.

"I will give you two cows and their calves."

Wizard and witch laughed aloud.

"I will add flax and corn besides."

Both laughed still louder.

"If that will not satisfy you, I will give you a silver spoon and some plates."

"No !" screamed the Field-mouse, "I need neither silver, nor corn, nor cattle, but I want you to get me a pair of wings to fly with."

"And I," said the Raven, "want you to get me four feet, so that I can run the better."

"And if you do not do this by to-morrow," they both added, "you belong to us, body and soul."

Tina found these conditions extremely hard ; however, she preferred to accept them, rather

than remain in the grave bound to a skeleton. Wizard and witch made her take a solemn oath to fulfil the stipulations: then the Field-mouse gnawed the rope, and the Raven took up Tina and flew with her out of the hole, and brought her into a field belonging to her father's farm. There he set her down, under an apple-tree, and told her he would come with his gossip to that very spot, the next evening, to receive their wages.

Tina scampered home as fast as she could, and told the people in the house all that had happened. Nobody knew what to advise, but the old grandpapa bethought himself of a wise woman who lived not far off, and to her he went, taking Tina with him.

He told her the story, and laid on her table three bundles of flax and a fat hen.

"This is a bad business, very bad," said the wise woman; "if you had not taken the oath, we could do well enough. I know these two associates. They are wicked magicians, and they know it is impossible to get what they ask for."

Tina wept and entreated, and the grandfather

promised to bring as much more flax and a second fat hen.

The wise woman pondered the matter. At length she said, "Listen, my child, and do as I tell you."

Tina promised the strictest obedience.

"Take a knife that has never cut flesh, or any thing that comes from flesh, and walk towards the hedge, and listen to the sound of the wind as it blows through the grass. When you hear a rustling like hail, you 'll know that it is the sleep-plant. Cut off the tops and stalks, tie them up in a little bunch, and carry it under the apple-tree. Then come to me again."

Tina did as she was bid. She went to the hedge, she heard the sound of the wind rustling through the sleep-plant like falling hail, she cut off tops and stems with a new knife, made up a little bunch of it, and carried it under the apple-tree. Then she went back to the wise woman, told her she had obeyed all her directions, and asked her what she should do next. The wise woman kept Tina with her until evening, and instructed her as to what she was to do. When night came, Tina repaired to the apple-tree, and

as soon as it was pitch dark, the Field-mouse made her appearance and inquired, —

“How is it with the wings? Are they ready?”

“Not yet,” said Tina, “but they will come soon.”

“Quick, then!” said the witch, “for I am in a hurry, and this very night I must be a hundred miles from here.”

“Be quiet a moment,” answered Tina, “and you shall see your wish gratified.”

The Field-mouse was delighted to see how politely Tina treated her, and thought to herself, I ’ll wait a minute, Gaffer Raven will be here presently.

She approached the bundle of sleep-weed, which Tina had tied up like a wisp of straw, and laid herself down upon it. In the very next moment, she was sound asleep. It was not long before the Raven came.

“Now, my darling,” said he to Tina, “where are the four feet you are to furnish me with?”

“Ah! I could not obtain them for love or money,” said the maiden.

“Yes, I knew that beforehand,” said the Raven, laughing, “now give me the half of your dear little soul, and your dear little body.”

“Just wait a bit, dear Mr. Raven, if you will have pity upon a poor little maiden, I will give you a dainty meal.”

“What is it?” asked the Raven.

“I’ve caught a mouse in a trap, that is full as large as a rat, and I’ve laid it down there.”

Tina pointed to the Field-mouse. The Raven blinked at it with hungry eyes. “A choice bit, indeed, which I shall not refuse. But still I shall insist upon my rights.”

“Well, eat, and after that do as you please; take all you are entitled to.”

The Raven did not stop for a second thought, he pounced upon the Field-mouse and swallowed it whole. Thereupon the Field-mouse waked up. She found she was in somebody’s stomach, and she began to scream, and kick and plunge about most furiously, and scratch so vigorously, that she made with her four feet four holes in the belly of the Raven, so that her legs came out through the holes; but as his plump paunch made a strong barrier to further progress, she could get no farther, and just then the wise woman came running, and with her hazel-wand she touched the Raven with the Field-mouse half in and half out of his body, saying,—

“Begone, spawn of the wicked serpent! Your desires are fulfilled. You, Raven, have four feet for running, and you, Field-mouse, have two wings for flying; so neither of you have any further claim upon the maiden. As a punishment for your diabolical cunning, and as a warning to others, you and your posterity shall henceforth be bird and yet no bird, beast and yet no beast, and neither bird nor beast shall own you.”

Thus originated the “Bat.”

This story of Tina is not only intended to *teach* us that we should not break our promises, but also to *warn* us against being haughty and fastidious, lest we reject what is really good, and make choice of what is any thing but desirable.

ST. VALENTINE'S RING.



THERE was once a king who lived right happy and contented, and who especially rejoiced in a daughter who passed for the most beautiful lady in the whole universe. This beloved daughter was named Tryphena.

All who knew her said without envy, that Tryphena was as good as she was pretty, and on this account the king would rather by far have lost all his horses and retinue, his castles, and every fortress in the land, than to have had the least harm happen to her.

One day, messengers from a neighboring prince were announced to the king. They were sent by the Prince of Komorre, a powerful and mighty lord, who possessed a country of equal extent with that governed by Tryphena's father.

The messengers laid at the king's feet honey, linen, and a dozen little sucking-pigs, according to the custom of the country at that time, and explained to him that her admirer had been present in disguise at the king's court, not long before, and had himself seen the young princess. He had conceived a most ardent passion for her, and desired to make her his wife, at whatever cost.

This proposal troubled both the king and Tryphena exceedingly. For this Prince of Komorre was a giant, and was considered one of the greatest reprobates, since Cain, that had ever lived upon the earth.

From a child he had found his pleasure in doing evil, and his wickedness even then was so horrible, that, whenever he left his castle, his own mother used to run and ring the alarm-bell, to let the people know that he was out, and give them an opportunity to provide for their safety. Later in life, when he had grown larger, and become lord of the land and people, there had been no bounds to his cruelty ; it was beyond every thing within the memory of man.

It was said, that one morning when he left his

castle, he met a child who was driving a colt to pasture; he immediately fell upon the poor child and killed it. At other times, when he returned from hunting, and had taken no game, he would set his dogs upon the poor people in the fields, and suffer them to be torn in pieces, as if they had been wild beasts.

But the most infamous thing of all was, that he had had four wives, one after another, who had all died suddenly, without any one's knowing how or why; but it was universally believed that he had put them to death, either by sword, fire, water, or poison.

This the king and Tryphena knew, as well as all the common people, and therefore the king answered, that his daughter was too young.

The messengers replied, in a very insolent manner, that the Prince of Komorre would receive no such answer as that, but that he had commanded them to declare war against the king, if they did not bring the princess home with them. The king replied, that they might do as they pleased.

The messengers then took up a handful of straw, lighted it, and threw it up into the air-

and as the wind blew the sparks in every direction, they declared that thus would their prince shed his wrath over the country of the king.

Tryphena's father was a man of courage, and a threat of this kind inspired him with no terror. He assembled his people and prepared for defence. A few days after this, news came that the Prince of Komorre had crossed the boundary with a powerful army, and with trumpets and cannons was advancing upon the capital.

The king placed himself at the head of his people, and sallied forth to meet the enemy. When the king had departed, and Tryphena was left alone, weeping, the door suddenly opened, and a hermit entered, who had the reputation of leading a very holy life, and of understanding things quite unintelligible to common people. He informed her that the two armies were met in battle; that her father would be defeated, and that she must rescue him by giving her hand to the Prince of Komorre.

Tryphena began to moan and lament, but the hermit said to her, "Fear nothing, Tryphena. Go quietly to the Prince of Komorre; through you shall he receive the punishment of his evil

deeds. Here, take this milk-white silver ring, and mark my words, — whenever the prince conceives any harm against you, the ring will become as black as a raven. The rest you will learn hereafter.”

The ring lent the princess fresh courage, and she agreed to do what he said.

Swiftly the hermit hastened away, and announced the joyful news to the contending armies. Still, notwithstanding the acquiescence of his daughter, the king would never have consented to the marriage had not the Prince made such solemn promises that he was persuaded to accept him as a son-in-law.

The marriage was celebrated with unheard-of splendor. On the first day an entertainment was given to six thousand guests, and on the following, the same number of poor people were feasted, the young pair themselves waiting upon them at table. Then followed dancing-parties, at which all the musicians of both kingdoms were in attendance, with every variety of instrument.

At last, when all the meats and all the pastry were devoured, and all the wine-flasks drained

of their contents, each one returned to his home, and the Prince of Komorre repaired to his own castle with the beautiful Tryphena.

Tryphena found the giant much more amiable than he had been represented; she could do with him just as she pleased; he was as docile as a little dog, and as gentle as a lamb. The dungeons of the castle were thrown open; no one now suffered any violence, and the people said in astonishment, "Wonderful! Since the beautiful Tryphena has become the bride of our prince, he no longer thirsts for tears and blood!"

But auspicious as appearances now were, Tryphena still felt sad whenever she thought of the sudden death which had overtaken all the other wives of the giant, and she could only still her disquiet by going down into the castle chapel and there engaging in prayer.

About this time, there was a great convocation of lords and knights, which the Prince of Komorre was under the necessity of attending. He took a sorrowful leave of his dear Tryphena, handed her all the keys from garret to cellar, and went away with a great retinue. Six months passed before he returned. His ardent desire to

return to Tryphena at length brought him home in all haste, and quite unexpectedly, and he entered her room just as she was busied in making a little lace cap for an infant.

At this sight, the Prince turned pale; he inquired for whom she was making that little cap, and when Tryphena replied that it was for their future son, the giant threw her a terrific glance, and went away without saying a word.

Still the princess suspected no harm, but as she looked down again to continue her sewing, she saw with horror that her silver ring was black as jet! She uttered a loud shriek, for she remembered the words of the hermit, and the danger that awaited her.

As may readily be supposed, what most troubled Tryphena was, that she was entirely ignorant of the reason why her husband was angry with her. In vain she revolved the matter over in her mind, all day long, and even till late into the night, and as her anxiety would allow her no rest, she arose and went down into the chapel. Hardly had she knelt down, when the castle clock struck, and its finger pointed to midnight. In the same moment, the graves in the chapel

sprung open, and forth came the wives of the giant in their winding-sheets !

Half-dead with terror, Tryphena attempted to fly, but the corpses called out to her : " Stay, poor wife, the giant is lurking about to kill you ! "

" Me ! " said the princess, hardly able to speak for terror ; " what have I done that he desires my death ? "

" It has been foretold to him, that his own son should kill him, as a punishment for his crimes ; for this reason he desires to murder you, as he has murdered us. "

Tryphena burst into tears. " O Heaven ! " she moaned, " what shall I do ? "

" Escape from the castle of the giant, and return home to the land of your father. "

" That is impossible, " replied the princess ; " the giant's big dog lies in the court, and keeps watch. "

" Give him the poison with which his master killed me, " said the first corpse.

" How shall I get down to the ground from the high wall ? "

" Take the rope with which I was strangled, " said the second corpse.

“ But what will guide me in the darkness ? ”

“ The flames that consumed me,” said the third corpse.

“ But how am I to travel so great a distance ? ”

“ With the aid of this staff that fractured my skull,” said the fourth corpse.

The princess took staff, flame, rope, and poison : with the poison she silenced the dog ; she descended the wall by means of the rope ; and, leaning on the staff, she followed the flames which lighted her way to her father’s kingdom.

That very next morning the giant intended to put Tryphena to death ; but she was gone, and he sought her in vain in every room and corner. When he found she was not in the castle, he mounted hastily into the watch-tower, and looked out, at the four points of the compass. He looked to the north, and there croaked a raven ; he looked to the east, there flew a swallow ; he looked to the south, there swept along a sea-gull ; he looked to the west, there fluttered a timid turtle-dove.

He knew at once that Tryphena had fled in that direction, and he immediately had his horse saddled, and prepared to pursue her.

The poor princess was still in the great forest which surrounded the giant's castle, and the ring, which had again turned black, now warned her that the giant was approaching. She fled hastily over the heath, till she came to a shepherd's hut, that was occupied by no one but an old magpie, which hung in a cage on the wall. Here, in this hut, the unhappy fugitive concealed herself the whole day, weeping and bemoaning her hard fate, and when night came she set out again upon her journey, choosing the most retired paths through the cornfields.

But the giant took the high road, and therefore did not fall in with Tryphena. Two days long he sought in vain, then he turned back, and, as ill luck would have it, he went into the shepherd's hut on the heath. The magpie had overheard Tryphena's lamentations, and her tongue being loosed, she chattered to herself continually, repeating the words she had heard: "Poor Tryphena! poor Tryphena!" The giant immediately perceived that the princess had been in this place; he called his bloodhound, and put him upon seeking out her tracks, and thus he followed up the footsteps of the flying princess.

Tryphena meantime had continued her way, and at length arrived in the vicinity of her father's territory. But she was unable to proceed farther; she was forced to lie down in a thicket, and there she gave birth to a remarkably beautiful boy. She took the child in her arms, caressed it, and wept for joy and sorrow at the same time.

All at once a falcon flew thither and alighted before her. By the golden ribbon around its neck, she perceived that it was her father's falcon. She called him by name, held out to him the silver ring, and said: "Fly, my falcon, fly, and carry this ring to my father, that he may know that I am in great danger."

The bird understood what she meant, took the ring in its beak, and flew away with the swiftness of lightning. Not long afterwards, the giant came up with his bloodhound, and Tryphena, having parted with her ring, had no warning of his approach, until she heard the voice of the cruel wretch. She trembled all over with terror, and hardly had time enough to wrap the baby in her mantle, and conceal him in a hollow tree, so swiftly rode up the giant on his fleet horse.

When he saw Tryphena he sent forth a roar like that of an enraged beast, rushed upon her, and with one stroke severed her head from her body. He did not observe the child in the hollow of the tree, but whistled to his dog, and rode off.

The falcon carried the ring directly to the court of the king. The king was seated at his table, and was just talking of his beloved daughter, when the falcon flew in, and laid the silver ring on the table. The king immediately perceived that it was the hermit's ring, and he sent for the holy man, who informed him how things stood. "Up, up, sir king!" he cried; "have your horses saddled, your daughter is in danger."

The horses were quickly ready, and the king, with the hermit and a numerous retinue, set off to aid the princess. The falcon flew on before them to show the way, and the horses kept up with the bird; but when they arrived at the place, they found the princess lying dead, and the child crying in the hollow tree. The king threw himself on the earth, tore his hair, and moaned so as to move the very oaks to pity; but the holy man soothed him, and bade him be

silent, then went up to the corpse, said a prayer over it, and uttered the command, "Arise!"

The corpse did so. "Take your head, and your child, and follow us to the giant's castle," was the second command of the hermit. The dead obeyed also here, and the astonished company mounted their horses, and set off at a quick gallop to the giant's castle. But swift as the horses galloped, the corpse steadily preceded them, holding in the left arm the dissevered head, and in the other the new-born child, and thus they all arrived before the giant's castle. The giant had seen them coming, and had ordered the drawbridge to be raised.

But the hermit took the dead princess by the hand, approached the castle moat, and cried with a loud voice, "Prince of Komorre, I bring you your wife, such as she is, through your murderous hand, together with the new-born child that belongs to you. Will you receive them under your roof?" The giant gave no answer. The hermit repeated these words a second time, but no voice answered; and when he had done so a third time, and still no reply came, he took the child from the arms of the corpse, and placed it

on the ground. O wonder! The child began to walk, wholly alone, and without any assistance! It went to the edge of the castle ditch, took up a handful of sand, flung it through the air against the castle, and cried with a bold voice: "Thus be thy ashes scattered, like this handful of sand, horrible wretch! The measure of thy iniquity is full!"

In the same instant, the towers fell with a stunning noise, the walls were rent asunder, and the whole castle became a heap of ruins, in which were buried the giant and all those who had taken part in his wickedness.

Then the hermit went up to the corpse, which still bore the dissevered head, took the head from the left arm, placed it again between the shoulders, and pronounced a prayer; the eyes instantly opened, and the beautiful princess was again alive, and both she and the land were freed from the wicked prince.

With joyful shout and acclamation, the king and his retinue brought the princess and the beautiful child back to the castle, and all praised the holy man, who was no other than Saint Valentine!

THE THREE ALMS.

A LONG time ago there lived two young lords, who were as rich as they could ask to be, and as handsome as their mother could desire to have them. Mylio, the oldest brother, was nearly seventeen years old, and Tonyk was fourteen. Both had received an excellent education, so that either might have been priest or magistrate, had he been old enough, and desired to become so.

Tonyk was kind-hearted, and always ready to help the poor, and to pardon offences ; his heart was ever disposed to love, and his hand to give. Mylio, on the contrary, gave to no one, not even what he owed them ; he was always trying to cheapen what he bought ; and if any one injured him, he revenged himself upon them with all the severity in his power.

Their father died when they were little children, and their mother, an excellent lady, had educated them herself. As the boys grew older, she thought of sending them to a distant uncle, that they might profit by his good counsel, and some time or other succeed to his great possessions. So one day she gave them each a new hat, shoes with silver buckles, a sky-blue cloak, a purse full of gold, and a good horse; and thus equipped, she sent them to live with her father's brother. The two youths set off highly delighted to visit a land that was wholly new to them. They suffered their horses to go so fast, that on the third day even they reached a foreign kingdom, where other trees grew than those they were accustomed to at home, and other fruits were ripening in the fields.

One morning, as they were riding over a cross-way, they saw a poor woman sitting beside the stone cross, by the way-side, who kept her face covered with her apron. Tonyk drew up his horse, and asked what was the matter. The beggar-woman answered, sobbing, that her son, her only support, had died the day before, and that she was now left to the mercy of strangers.

Tonyk was touched with compassion ; but Mylio, who had ridden on, and stopped some way off, cried out to him, mockingly : “ You surely are not going to believe every beggar you meet with on the way ! This woman is only looking out for the purses of the passers-by.”

Tonyk answered, “ Speak not so harshly, my dear brother ; see how your hard words make her weep. Only see now, how much in figure and age she resembles our mother.”

Then, turning to the beggar, he said, as he reached her his purse, “ Take it, my poor woman. I cannot, indeed, do much, but Heaven will further help you.”

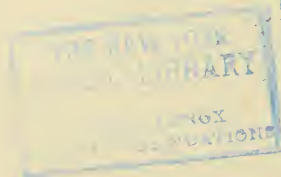
The beggar-woman took the purse, kissed it, and said to Tonyk, “ Noble lord, you have made a poor woman rich : refuse not this nut from my hand ; there is a wasp in it, with a diamond sting.”

Tonyk took the nut, thanked the poor woman, and continued his way with Mylio. It was not long before they reached the edge of a wood, and there they saw a half-naked boy, who was looking about in the holes of the trees, and singing in a most doleful manner. From time to time



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he would beat his frozen hands together to warm them, and then say in a singing tone, "O, I'm freezing, I'm freezing." They could hear his teeth chatter.

At this sight, the tears came into Tonyk's eyes, and he said to his brother: "Ah, Mylio! how that poor, innocent boy must suffer with the cold!"

"He must be a very chilly body," answered Mylio. "I do not find the cold so cutting."

"But you have on a satin vest, and over that a cloth coat, and over that still the sky-blue cloak; but he is half naked."

"Ha!" laughed Mylio, "he is a little peasant lad."

"Ah!" replied Tonyk, "it goes to my very heart, when I think that you might have been born in his place. I cannot see him suffer so."

At these words, he stopped his horse, called the boy to him, and asked him what he was doing. "I am hunting for titmice, that sleep in the holes of the trees," answered the boy.

"And what do you do with the titmice?"

"When I have caught enough, I shall carry them to the city to sell, so that I may buy me a

coat, that will keep me as warm as if the dear sun shone all the time."

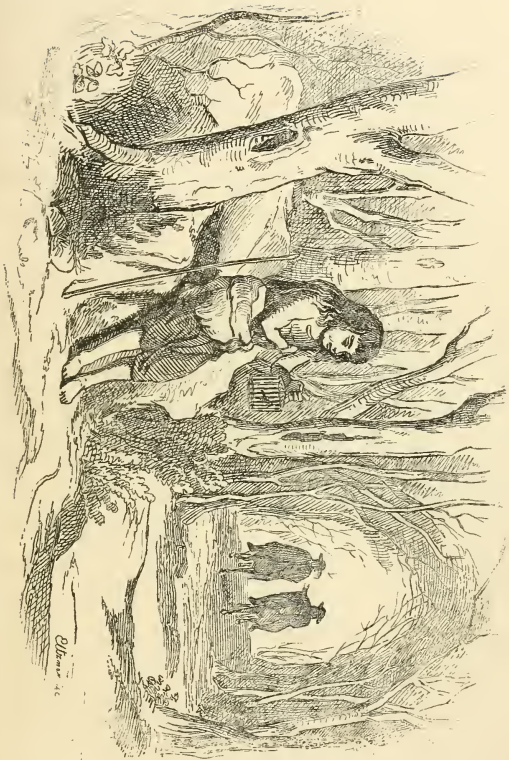
"Have you found any yet?" asked Tonyk.

"Only one as yet," replied the boy, showing a little cage made of rushes, in which sat a titmouse.

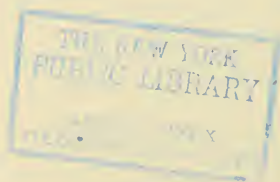
"Give it to me; I will buy it of you," said Tonyk, and threw the sky-blue cloak over him. "Wrap yourself in it, you need it more than I."

The two brothers now set off again on their journey. Mylio ridiculed his brother, and indeed Tonyk had at first to suffer considerably from the north wind, for want of his warm cloak. But when they had got through the wood, the air grew milder, the mist melted away, and the sun threw its friendly rays through the clouds. They soon came to a meadow, where a spring was flowing, near which they found an old man sitting, covered with rags, with a beggar's pack upon his shoulder. When he espied the travellers, he called to them with tones and gestures of earnest entreaty. Tonyk went up to him. "What do you wish, old man?" he asked, taking off his hat to the venerable old man.

"Ah, my dear gentlemen!" he answered, "you



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see my hairs are gray, and my cheeks are hollow. I am so weak from extreme old age, that my limbs can no longer carry me. I must perish here, if one of you will not sell me his horse."

"*You* buy one of our horses, you beggar!" cried Mylio, in a contemptuous tone; "how will you pay for it?"

"Look at this hollowed acorn," answered the beggar, "there sits a spider in it that spins threads stronger than steel; give me up one of your horses, and I will give you the acorn and spider for it."

The eldest brother broke out into a loud laugh. "Do you hear, Tonyk?" he cried out. "I believe the old man is an impudent fool."

But the younger brother mildly replied, "A poor man cannot offer more than he has." He dismounted from his horse, approached the old man, and said: "I give you my horse, good old man, not on account of the price which you offer for it, but for pure compassion's sake; it is yours."

The old man wished him thousand-fold blessings, mounted the horse with his help, and disappeared from the meadow.

But Mylio could not forgive this last almsgiving of his brother.

“Senseless prodigal!” he cried, angrily, “are you not ashamed of the condition into which your folly has brought you? You think, forsooth, after you have squandered all your own property, to share my purse, my cloak, and my horse. You have deceived yourself. You may now gain wisdom through adversity. The privations which follow your prodigality may teach you economy for the future.”

“You are right, my brother,” answered Tonyk, gently. “It will be no bad lesson for me, and I am not disposed to escape the consequences at your expense. It never occurred to me to lay claim to your money, cloak, or horse; so ride on your way quietly and happily, without troubling yourself about me.”

Mylio returned no answer, but gave the spur to his horse, and galloped away. Tonyk followed on foot, but he harbored no grudge against his brother.

They found themselves not far from a mountain gorge, through which the road led. It was called the Valley of Torment, for on the very top

of the rocks that towered up on both sides of it there lived a giant, who laid in wait for travellers, like a hunter for his prey. This giant was blind, and he had no feet; but he had so sharp an ear, that he could hear the grass grow in the ground, and he was a great magician. His servants were two trained eagles, one white and the other red; these he sent out to seize the prey, when he heard it coming. When the people of that country were obliged to pass through this ravine, they took off their shoes, and went barefoot, not daring to breathe loud, for fear that the giant should hear them. Mylio knew nothing of this, so he rode proudly through the valley, and the clatter of his horses' hoofs upon the stones waked the giant.

"Hallo, my huntsmen!" he cried, "where are you?" White eagle and red eagle were immediately at hand. "Go and bring me for supper what is going through the valley down below," cried the giant. Swift as arrows, the two eagles shot down into the gorge, seized Mylio by the sky-blue cloak, and dragged him up the heights, to the dwelling of the giant.

At this moment Tonyk arrived at the entrance

of the ravine. He saw his brother snatched up into the air by two eagles, and he uttered a loud cry, and rushed to the spot. But the eagles vanished with Mylio in a few minutes, behind the clouds which covered the summits of the rocks. Stunned and motionless with terror, Tonyk stood looking up to the rocky walls, which rose up steep and perpendicular till they reached the sky.

“O my brother! my brother!” he cried out at last; “how shall I rescue my brother?”

Suddenly he heard three little, fine voices close by, which said: “Who would despair like that, at every little misfortune?”

Tonyk looked around astonished. “Who speaks to me, and where are you?” he asked.

“In your coat-pocket,” answered the three voices.

Tonyk felt in his pocket, and took out the nut, the acorn, and the little rushen cage. He remembered the little creatures that were shut up in them, and he said: “Will you rescue my brother Mylio?”

“Yes, yes, yes!” answered the tiny creatures, with their three several voices.

“And how will you begin, my poor play-things?” asked Tonyk further.

“Open our cages, and you shall see.”

Tonyk did as they desired. The spider hastened to a neighboring tree, and began to spin a glittering web, as fine as silk, but stronger than steel. Then the titmouse flew thither, took the spider on his back, and mounted with her higher and higher, till the web, whose threads formed a kind of staircase, reached the top of the rocks. Tonyk now climbed the marvellous ladder, which reached to the heights above. The wasp flew on before him, merrily buzzing the while, and thus they came together to the dwelling of the giant.

In a great stone cavern, as high as a church, sat the giant, without eyes or feet. He seemed to be in great spirits, for he was rocking to and fro, like an enormous poplar swayed by the wind, and he sang in a loud voice while he sharpened a big knife with which he was going to kill poor Mylio, who lay close beside him, with his arms and legs, tied upon his back, so that he looked like a chicken ready trussed for the spit. Both eagles were in a corner by the hearth, one turn-

ing a spit, and the other laying wood on the fire. Amidst the noise of his singing and the whetting of the knife, the giant did not observe the entrance of Tonyk and his little companions. But the red eagle saw him, and darted upon him, and was about to seize him with his claws; but the wasp was quickly at hand, and put out the eagle's eyes with his diamond sting. White eagle went to his brother's assistance, but he fared no better, for he too had his eyes put out. Then the wasp fell upon the giant, who had risen up at the outcry of his servants, and with his sting he left him neither rest nor repose. The giant sent forth a horrible roar; but strike about as he would, he could not hit the wasp, for he had no eyes to see with, and he could not get away, for he had no feet to run with. At last he threw himself down, with his face to the earth, to protect it from the stings of his tormentor. The spider hastened up to him, and spun a net over him as fine as silk and as strong as steel; so there he lay imprisoned, without power to stir. Loudly he called his two eagles to his aid, but all in vain. They were both mad with pain, and as they knew the giant was overpowered, they

feared him no longer, but resolved to avenge themselves upon him for the long slavery in which he had held them. So they flew at their former master, beat him violently with their wings, and, full of rage, tore his flesh through the meshes of the steel net. With every stroke of their bills they tore off a piece of his flesh, and they did not desist till the bare bones appeared. Then they sat down to rest; but the flesh of a magician is so indigestible, that they fell down dead on that very spot.

Tonyk loosed his brother's bonds, embraced him with tears of joy, and went with him out of the giant's cave to the edge of the rocks. There quickly appeared the titmouse and the wasp, harnessed like horses to the little rushen cage, which was changed into a stately coach, and they invited the two brothers to take their seats in it. The spider took his place behind as footman, and, with the swiftness of the wind, away they went. Tonyk and Mylio passed in this manner with the greatest ease over meadows, woods, mountains, and villages; for in the air the roads are everywhere of the very best description, till they came to their uncle's castle. There

the coach descended to the earth, and rolled towards the drawbridge, where the brothers found both their horses tied. On the saddle of the horse that belonged to Tonyk hung the purse and the cloak, only the purse was much larger and better filled, and the cloak was decorated with precious stones. Tonyk looked with astonishment towards the coach, to ask what all this meant, but the coach had vanished, and instead of the wasp, the titmouse, and the spider, there stood three glittering angels!

The brothers fell down upon the ground, struck with amazement and admiration; but the most beautiful and glorious angel of the three approached Tonyk, and said: "Fear not, dearest youth. We are called Good Works; the poor beggar-woman, the freezing boy, the lame old man, were no other than ourselves. Remain as good as you have been thus far; and you, Mylio, learn a lesson from what you have seen, that even the humblest and smallest of God's creatures can be useful."

At these words they rose in the air, ascending higher and higher, till they vanished at last like swallows behind the clouds.

Mylio embraced his brother Tonyk, whose kind heart had saved his life, and became ever afterwards benevolent and charitable as his brother.

THE LITTLE MAN OF THE RUSHES.

ONCE on a time, before an almanac was ever heard of, or any body had ever thought of reckoning the years, there lived on the finest farm in the whole valley an honest peasant, who had one daughter, who was called Barbary, or more commonly Bab. She was famed, far and wide, for her beauty; but above every thing else, she was counted the best dancer and the most daintily dressed maiden in the country.

When she went to church on Sundays, she wore a little cap embroidered with gold; a lace kerchief about her neck; five petticoats, one over the other; and shoes with silver buckles; so that every body looked at her with envy, and out of ill-will they turned up their noses at her.

Bab troubled herself little about that, for the

handsomest young men of the village flocked round her, and whispered her praises in each other's ears, so that she often blushed up to the eyes at overhearing what they were saying about her.

Among all the young fellows that gazed with eyes of love on Miss Bab, there was one in particular who was deeply smitten with her charms. This was her father's head workman on the farm, an active laborer, and an honest-hearted blade, but simple and bashful, and as homely as a tailor. For this reason the girl would not listen to him, although he was in other respects a worthy person, and whenever he accosted her, she always used to tell him that he was a clumsy ass. But Joachim loved her out of the very depths of his heart, and he could bear to have her scold him; but it troubled him sorely that she whom he loved should, at the same time that the very sight of her was a joy to him, occasion him such unspeakable vexation.

One evening, as he was driving the horses home from the pasture, he stopped at a swampy watering-place to let them drink. He stood a little apart, with his head sunk upon his breast,

and he sighed heavily, for he was thinking of Bab, when all at once a voice, issuing from the rushes of the swamp, called out to him: "What troubles you so, Joachim? You must not be so easily discouraged."

Joachim, full of astonishment, raised his head, and said, "Who is it that speaks to me?"

"It is I, the little man of the rushes," answered the same voice.

"I see no one," Joachim called out.

"Look straight before you, and you'll see a handsome green frog in among the rushes. I take all kinds of shapes, just as I please, and I can even make myself invisible when I've a mind to."

"Can you ever be seen in your ordinary shape?"

"Why not? You shall see that, forthwith, if that will amuse you."

With these words, the frog sprung upon the back of one of the horses, and suddenly changed into a tiny dwarf dressed in green, with very delicate, shining boots. Joachim was rather frightened, and he drew back several paces; but the dwarf said he need not be afraid, for he

would do him no harm, but on the contrary he would be of use to him.

“But how have I deserved your favor?” said the husbandman, a little mistrustful.

“You did me a service last winter,” answered the little man of the rushes. “My brother and I are at strife with the Kobolds, who live in the holes and caves, because they consider it a crime in us to be well disposed to mortal men. So we were obliged to escape from them, and conceal ourselves under the form of animals, and from that time we have been in the habit of wandering about under different shapes, and thus I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with you.”

“How so?”

“Do you remember that about three months ago, when you were working in the alder thicket, you found a robin redbreast caught in a snare?”

“O yes!” replied Joachim, “I remember it well. I gave him his freedom, and said, ‘Thou eatest no corn; there, take thy freedom, bird of heaven!’”

“Well now, that robin redbreast was I, and at that moment I resolved to be your friend; and

to give you a proof of it, I will get Bab for your wife, for I know you love her dearly."

"Ah! little man, if you could do that! I would give you every thing in the world but body and soul."

"Let me manage it; between now and a couple of months, the farm and the maiden shall be yours."

"How will you bring that about?"

"That you shall certainly see. In the first place, smoke your pipe, eat, sleep, and trouble yourself about nothing."

Joachim thought the conditions were not hard, and he would certainly take up with them. Thereupon he thanked the dwarf, pulled on his hat, and drove the horses on to the farm-yard.

The next day was Sunday. Bab rose earlier than usual, and went out to the cow-stalls, of which she had the care. To her great astonishment, she found every thing already in order; fresh straw was laid, fresh fodder was placed in the manger, the cows were milked, and the milk made into butter.

As she had told Joachim, the evening before, that she should be up betimes to be ready to go

to church, she naturally thought that he had done all this, and she thanked him for so doing; but Joachim answered shortly, that he did not know what she meant. Nevertheless Bab remained of the same opinion.

These services were now done for her every day. Never were the stalls so clean, nor the cows so sleek and fat. Morning and evening Bab found her pans full of milk, and a pound of fresh butter delicately bordered with green leaves. In a few weeks she became accustomed to this state of things, and consequently did not get up until the sun was high in the skies, and it was time to think of breakfast and dinner.

But this labor was soon taken out of her hands, for one morning, when she rose from her bed, she found the house swept, the kitchen utensils brightly scoured, the porridge on the fire, and the bread cut in slices, so that she had nothing to do but step to the street-door, and call in the men and maidservants.

Again she thought this must be Joachim's doings, and she could not get rid of the thought that Joachim must make an excellent husband for a woman who liked rest and pleasure.

In fact, Bab needed only to express a wish before Joachim, when it was immediately fulfilled.

When the wind blew so cold, or the sun glowed so warm, that Bab feared to spoil her complexion by going out to the spring, she would say softly, "I wish that my water-pails were standing full in their places, and my pitchers were filled."

Then she would go to gossip with a neighbor, and when she came back, there stood the pails and the pitchers on the stone table, filled according to her wish.

If it was troublesome to her to bake bread, or inconvenient to heat the oven, she had only to whisper, "I wish to my heart I had my six fifteen-pound loaves on the table, over the tray," and in a couple of hours afterward, the six loaves were there!

If she thought the market too far off, and the roads too bad, she would say, the day before, "Why am I not back again with the empty milk-pails and butter-bowls, a pound of black cherries in my dish, and money in my pocket?" The next morning when she rose, she found, at the foot of her bed, the milk-pails empty, and the butter-

bowls likewise, a pound of black cherries in the wooden dish, and a bright gold piece in her pocket.

But she was not long satisfied with all this. Would she send a message to another maiden, or bespeak any thing she wanted, did she wish to buy a ribbon from the city, or to know when a church festival or a dance would take place, Joachim was always at hand; she needed only to say what she wanted, and it was immediately done. This went so far, that she would revenge herself sometimes on her young friends in this way, and often play them many a harmless trick.

In this way it was that she could not live without Joachim, because in her own mind she considered him as the cause of all these things. He served her for rest, as well as for pleasure, for her friendships and her spites; in one word, he was any thing and every thing to her.

When things were in this train, the little man of the rushes advised his *protégé* to renew his proposals again, and this time Bab actually heard him to the end. He was too awkward and homely for a lover, but she thought he would do very well for a husband. If she married him,

she could sleep till breakfast-time like a city lady, she could wear fine clothes, she could gossip at a neighbor's door, with her hands under her apron, and every Sunday she could go to a dance. Joachim cared for every thing for her. He labored for her, he took care of the house for her. Joachim was the beast of burden which drew the wagon, and Bab sat above on the hay, and plied the whip to make him go faster.

All this the maiden thought over in her mind, so she told the young man he might see her father, and she would do as he said. But she knew very well beforehand that her father would give his consent, for he had often declared, that he knew no one who could superintend a farm better than Joachim.

So the next month they were married, and a few days afterwards the father died, and left the house and farm to the young folks. This was for Joachim no small charge. But the little man of the rushes came to his aid. He worked for him as a servant, and he did more than six hired men would have done ; he kept the tools and the horses in excellent order ; he repaired what was going to decay, and he chose the best time for

sowing and harvest. If there was work to be done in haste, the little man would call his brothers, and all the dwarfs would hasten to the spot, with mattocks, sickles, or rakes; did they lack draught cattle, the little man would send Joachim where his brothers lived, and he had only to say, "Dear dwarfs, be so good as to lend me a pair of oxen, or a span of horses, with all thereto belonging," and in a moment he had what he wanted. For all this, the little man asked no other pay than a milk-pan of milk every day, and on this account Joachim loved him as if he had been his own son. Bab, on the contrary, hated him, and not without reason. From the very morning after her marriage, she found, to her astonishment, that the help which had been so long extended to her was withheld, and when she began to find fault with Joachim on this account, and he did not rightly understand what she meant, the little man laughed aloud, and told her that he had performed all these services for her, but that he merely did so before her marriage, and only for Joachim's sake. Now, he added, he had other things to do, and she must begin again to take charge of the household affairs.

Bab, seeing her hopes thus deceived, was filled with hatred and bitterness towards the little man. Every morning, when she had to rise before day to milk the cows or go to market, and every evening, when she had to churn till midnight, she cursed the little man who had ruined all her expectations of an idle, pleasure-seeking life. And then, when she saw Joachim's sun-burnt face, his bristly hair, and his squinting eyes, her rage knew no bounds.

"No, cursed dwarf," she would say, "I will never forgive you for seducing me into taking Joachim for a husband, and I will be sure to pay you for it some time or other."

One day she was invited to a wedding in a neighboring village, and the saddle-horse happened to be sick, and the others were in use on the farm; and as she did not choose to go on foot, she conquered her pride, and asked the little man for a saddle-horse. He sent her out on the moor to his brothers, and he charged her to be sure to remember to ask piece by piece for every thing that belonged to a horse.

Bab went, and she thought she could do no better than to say, "Little dwarfs, my dear

friends, lend me a black horse, with eyes, mouth, ears, saddle, and bridle." Immediately the horse stood before her; she mounted it, and rode to the wedding. On the way, she noticed that every body looked after her with surprise, and laughed, and some said, "Look, look, she has left her horse's tail hanging in the stable."

Bab looked behind her, and sure enough her horse had no tail! She had forgotten to ask for the tail, and the dwarfs had taken her exactly at her word. Bab grew red with rage; she tried to make the horse go faster, but blows and kicks were of no avail, the horse would go his own gait, and Bab was constrained to overhear the jokes of the passers-by at her expense. Raving against the little man of the rushes, she came home at night, for she had no doubt that he had played her this trick intentionally, and she resolved to take vengeance on him at the first opportunity.

Spring had now opened, and, May being the festival time of the dwarfs, the little man begged permission of Joachim to invite his brothers to a feast, and dance in the evening on the barn-floor. Joachim naturally could not say

no. He told Bab to prepare the barn-floor, to spread out her whitest sheets, and to set out an abundance of fine wheat-bread and butter, to reserve all the morning's and evening's milk for them, with other appropriate accompaniments. To his great surprise, Bab made not a word of objection. She prepared every thing, spread the sheets, and set out the bread and the milk; but in the place where the dwarfs were to seat themselves, she strewed all the red-hot coals which she had drawn out of her oven, so that the little man and his guests were burnt to the bone, and with loud shrieks they ran away. They came back again, however, each one with a bucket of water, which he poured on the coals, so that the building might not be injured. But after they had extinguished the fire, they arranged themselves in a circle, and danced around house and farm-yard, singing at the same time:—

“ With treacherous heart and cruel hand,
You 've burned with fire your faithful friends;
Henceforth we quit both house and land,
With us your prosperous fortune ends.”

And that very same evening they vanished from the country, and never showed themselves again.

With them vanished prosperity and success. After the little man left, Joachim had no one to care for him, or assist him in the labors of his farm; instead of thrift came waste and misfortune, and Joachim became poorer from day to day, till at last he mourned himself to death. Then proud Bab was driven from the farm, and forced to take service with other people, where she had to endure a great many hardships.

THE STROLLING BEGGAR.

THE days when good fairies and spirits descended to the earth to make mortals happy, or to console them in misfortune, are long since gone by. People do not believe in them now-a-days, and therefore they have discontinued their visits, and a great many beliefs which are now entertained will have passed away in the same manner, in the course of a century hence, because people will then think and feel differently from what they do now. Whether this change of views takes place because people are, as they affirm, actually richer in spiritual endowments, or poorer in that respect, is a matter we will not trouble ourselves about; but at the time when every body believed in such good spirits, it happened that a young man named Melchior set out upon his travels.

Melchior was in the prime of his youth, and he had neither father nor mother, nor any relations whatever. His guardian had given him a walking-staff, pressed three dollars into his hand, and sent him forth into the wide world to seek his fortune.

Melchior had already passed over a good piece of road, and he was thinking over to himself what he had better do with this vast sum of money. While he was cogitating the matter, he drew near a village, and he saw just without the village, on the road behind the little church, a corpse lying on the ground. He waited there till some people came along, and he inquired of them why this dead body was left lying there.

“It is a poor travelling beggar,” they said, “who last evening breathed his last out here in the open air; he left nothing behind him but the poor, ragged clothes he has on, and so the priest would not take the trouble to have him properly buried.”

“And was there no one who would furnish a paltry coffin and pay the surplice fees, when the priest is so hard-hearted?”

The people said, “No,” and Melchior ex-

claimed, "No? But no one knows how nearly this may concern him. The poor man shall not lie here and waste away, the sport of the people and the prey of the ravens. I have three dollars, if that will suffice; I am sure I shall get through the world somehow or other."

He begged an introduction to the base priest; to whom he counted out the burial fees, and with the rest of the money he bought a coffin. He remained until the corpse was interred; but the service took no more time than a smith would take to shoe a horse, for a bad priest prays according to his pay. Melchior covered up the grave decently, planted a green bush on the mound, wished the dead a peaceful rest, and went on his way.

After a short time, he became hungry and thirsty, and then he remembered that, of all the money his guardian had given him for his travelling expenses, not a cent remained. He went into the wood, and looked for berries and other wild fruit, and when he had gathered what he wanted, he looked around upon the little birds who were hopping among the branches, and pecking for worms in the holes of the trees, and he said to himself:—

“The birds are much better off than men; they need neither butler nor baker; the broad, blessed light of heaven belongs to them, and the earth is their garden, in which they find their appropriate food, the insects are their game, the grass their barley-field, and there is fruit for them everywhere. Yes,” he added, “they have reason to sing and twitter the whole day long.”

Full of these thoughts he had gone deeper into the wood, but his step grew gradually slower, and at length he sat down under a tall oak, and soon fell asleep.

As he lay there sleeping, he began to dream, and it seemed to him that he saw the strolling beggar whom he had just had buried appear before him; but his ragged clothes were changed into glittering raiment, and upon his head was a coronet sparkling with diamonds. While he was gazing at him, and wondering if it were he or not, he heard a voice that came from the mouth of the apparition, which thus addressed him:—

“Melchior, attend to my words! I am the strolling beggar, Stephen, whose body you have had buried. Long as I wandered around among men, I found not one who deserved my favor;

for I am no mortal man, but a powerful being who rules over the spirit-world, and also over subterranean treasures. But what all denied me during my lifetime, you have done for me in death. Now, hear me: presume not to think that the birds in the trees are better off than yourself or than other men, for you possess a higher intelligence than they, and you were born to a more glorious destiny, and therefore is it that you had your option to do as you did, or to keep your three dollars, and suffer my body to decay in the open air. But after the deed comes the recompense, and that you may perceive this to be so, hear me further, and mark me well, for it is no dream.

“Not far from here, in a level field, stands a house which you will easily recognize by its red and green weathercock, in which lives a man with a daughter as fair as the day, and as gentle as a babe in the cradle. Go thither, knock at the door, and say that they know already why you have come, and the man will receive you into his house, and the rest you will soon learn yourself. Only do not forget, when you stand in need of assistance, to call out:—

‘ Help, dead beggar-man, friendly shade !
Myself I cannot help or aid ! ’ ”

After these words, the apparition and the dream vanished together, and Melchior awaked. He marvelled greatly over what he had dreamed ; but after much reflection, he thought best to try and see if there was any thing in it. So he went over the field and searched about for the house. Night was coming on, so that it cost him some trouble to find it ; but at last, seeing a flock of pigeons, he followed their course, and soon came in sight of the red and green weather-cock.

Melchior knocked at the door, and said, as he had been directed, that it was already known to the people of the house why he had come.

Immediately the man of the house appeared, a feeble old man, whose head was shaking with palsy, and who was supported by his daughter, a pretty, fresh-looking maiden, who looked, at her father’s side, like the ivy blossoming on an old, ruined wall.

Both saluted Melchior in the most friendly manner, and brought him into a beautiful apartment. Melchior was pressed to sit by the

old man's settle, on a chair of satin, while his daughter prepared the evening repast.

Melchior wondered greatly over this reception, and particularly over the blooming face of the maiden, whom he could not gaze at enough, and the longer he looked at her, the prettier he thought she was, till at last his heart beat like an old-fashioned timepiece.

"Ah!" he thought, in his mind, "how happy must he be, who, alone and undisturbed, can chat with this lovely maiden!"

When the supper was ended, and Lizzy (as the maiden was called) was clearing away the tea-things, the old man turned to Melchior, and said: "We have entertained you to the best of our ability, but not with the pleasure with which we should do so, if our house were not visited by a terrible calamity. Formerly we had about twenty horses and forty cows, but an evil sprite has got into the stables, and horses and cows have vanished one after another; and as often as we buy more, these also disappear in the course of a single night. No means of driving away the evil sprite has succeeded, and as I can keep no cattle, the whole of this farm lies fallow. I

have long been expecting the return of my cousin Matthias, but he has been drawn for the war, and we hear nothing from him, and I know not whether he is living or dead. So at last I have given out word in all the towns throughout the country, that whoever would rid my stables of the wicked elf should receive my daughter as his wife, and the whole farm as her marriage portion."

"Alas!" he added, with tears in his eyes, "many have come, but not one has ever returned; all have disappeared in the stable, as the horses and cows did before them."

Melchior, who had the greatest confidence in the words of the apparition, because every thing had thus far turned out just as he had said, replied, that he hoped to overpower the wicked spirit.

He asked leave to make a fire in the stable, took his travelling staff and a stout club in his hand, and was conducted to the stable by Lizzy.

The building into which he was brought was an enormous stable, divided into two parts, one half being designed for the cows, and the other for the horses; but all the stalls were empty, and

the spiders had spun their great webs in them without let or hinderance.

Melchior lighted a fire on the pavement, and waited to see what would happen. For the first quarter of an hour, he heard nothing but the crackling of the wood; in the second quarter of an hour, he heard nothing but the whistling of the wind through the broken window-pane; in the third quarter of an hour he heard nothing but the gnawing of the worms in the beams; but in the fourth quarter of an hour, there began to be a rushing and roaring among the stones of the paved floor, the heaviest stone slowly rose up, and a dragon's head issued forth out of the ground, that was as big as a barn-door, and flat as a viper's head, and in its forehead glittered a row of eyes of all the colors of the rainbow.

Now the beast placed a pair of powerful red claws on the pavement, fixed its eyes on Melchior, and, with a fearful hiss, left its hole. His long, scaly body was wreathed up in enormous coils, as it came up like an endless cable out of the hole. Melchior was a bold youth, but nevertheless at this sight the blood froze in his veins. Already he felt the poisonous breath of the drag-

on blowing upon him, and he called out in his anguish : —

“ Help, dead beggar-man, friendly shade !

Myself I cannot help or aid.”

And that very moment the apparition of his dream stood by his side.

“ Fear not, Melchior,” said he, “ but attack the monster boldly.”

Melchior raised his club, advanced upon the monster, swung his staff, and after a few sturdy blows upon the head, the dragon lay dead upon the floor.

In the morning, Melchior left the stable, and called the people to take away the dead dragon. At the sight of the monster, the stoutest-hearted were horror-struck, and started back with terror.

“ Be not afraid,” said Melchior ; “ he will do no more harm, — he is dead. Henceforth the stalls are safe again, and no more cows or horses will be destroyed.”

With a long rope the men dragged the dragon out of the stable, the length of his body being twice the length of the whole farm.

The father embraced Melchior in great joy, and kept his promise by giving him Lizzy for his

wife, and the whole farm for her dower. A short time after this he died.

Melchior and Lizzy were the happiest people in the world, and there was nothing that they could wish for to add to their happiness. But one evening when they were sitting at table eating their supper, the door opened, and a soldier entered, who was so tall that his head reached the ceiling. Lizzy recognized her cousin Matthias; he had come back from the war, to marry his cousin Lizzy, — not that he cared for her, but for the sake of the marriage-portion.

When he saw how things had gone, he was wild with rage, but he was careful to conceal his feelings from the young couple. Melchior received him like an affectionate brother, and set before him the best that the house afforded, he showed him into the best room, and went himself with him through the fields, which were loaded with a glorious harvest. But the more Matthias saw of Melchior's prosperity, the greater grudge he bore towards him, and the more intense grew his indignation that all this did not belong to him.

One day he invited Melchior to go hunting

with him, and he took him to a lonely windmill on a heath, which had no owner. Around it he had heaped up fagots and brush-wood, and when they came up to it, he stood still a minute and then called out: "Ha! look! you can see your farm from here."

"Where?" asked Melchior.

"Here, behind this heap of bushes; do'nt you see the windows of the upper story?"

"I am too short," answered Melchior.

"That is true," answered Matthias.

"What a pity! I can see Lizzy in the little meadow near the garden."

"Is she alone?"

"No, she is talking with two men, who are talking very kindly to her."

"And what is Lizzy doing?"

"She is listening to them, and plucking at her apron."

Melchior raised himself on tiptoe. "Ah, if I could only see her!" he said.

"That is easy enough," replied Matthias. "Climb up on the mill, and you will be higher than I."

Melchior was pleased with this good advice,

and climbed hastily up the ladder. When he was up, Matthias asked him what he saw.

"I see trees that look no higher than ripe corn, and houses that look no bigger than snail-shells."

"You must look nearer."

"Nearer to me, I see water with boats on it, that look no larger than floating tubs."

"Look still nearer," said the soldier again.

"Still nearer, I see the heath, with thousands of red flowers."

"Look close beside you!"

"Close beneath me," cried Melchior enraged, "I see flames that are rising up high around the mill, and you have taken away the ladder!"

It was indeed so. Matthias had lighted the heaps of brush, and carried away the ladder. The mill was all on fire like a baker's oven, and Matthias ran away with a mocking laugh.

Luckily Melchior remembered his wondrous couplet, and hardly had he called out,

"Help, dead beggar-man, friendly shade !

Myself I cannot help or aid,"

than the apparition came again as at first, holding a rainbow in his hand, on which Melchior descended as if it had been a ladder, unhurt from the flames of the mill.

When Melchior entered his house, Matthias was thunderstruck, and ran for his horse and weapons of defence, for he thought nothing else than that Melchior was going to give him up to justice. Melchior saw him as he was going out of the door, and called to him.

“Fear not, cousin ; no person in the world shall know what has happened on the heath. Your heart is diseased and filled with envy because every thing goes well with me, but I will cure you. From this day forth, so long as I live, half of every thing I possess, Lizzy excepted, shall belong to you. Be comforted then, and remain with us.”

The deed of gift was drawn up, signed, and sealed, and every three months Matthias received half the produce of the whole estate, the fields as well as the stables, the hens as well as the pigeons.

Generosity like that of Melchior ought surely to have satisfied him, but Matthias grew more dissatisfied and envious than ever. Benefits which are unmerited are like wine when one drinks it without being thirsty, — they give neither joy nor blessing. Matthias no longer desired the

death of Melchior, for then the generous donation would be taken from him ; but he hated him as a caged wolf hates his keeper.

What most vexed him was, that his cousins lacked nothing. Even the only thing that had been wanting to their happiness was now vouchsafed to them, a son, a most beautiful boy.

Melchior invited all the gentlefolks for five miles round to the child's baptism. They came from all the neighboring towns, with their wives and daughters, and the whole farm was full of horses and carriages.

When they were all assembled, Melchior brought in the little boy and showed him to his guests. The door opened, and in came Matthias. Lizzy uttered a stifled cry, for his wicked expression of face boded nothing good.

Matthias went laughing up to Melchior, and clapped him on the shoulder, and said, " Many thanks, my dear cousin, for the new present you have made me."

" What present ? " asked Melchior much puzzled.

" Only your little boy there."

" What do you wish to do with him ? "

“ You surely have not forgotten,” said Matthias, with a mocking laugh, “ what is promised to me on this parchment, the half of all the property, Lizzy excepted ; and surely this little boy is included in the bargain.”

All present shrieked with horror, but Matthias remained unmoved, and insisted that he would have his half of the little boy.

Melchior and Lizzy entreated him to spare the child, but the hard-hearted soldier persisted in his claim, and seized his sword to divide the little creature in two.

In the anguish of his heart Melchior repeated, almost unconsciously, the magical couplet, —

“ Help, dead beggar-man, friendly shade !
Myself I cannot help or aid.”

A flash of lightning brought the soldier crippled to the floor. The parchment containing the deed of gift was burned up, and the glittering apparition of the Beggar-man became visible in the room in all its glorious beauty.

“ That is the reward of your covetousness,” he cried, in a voice of thunder, to the half-dead Matthias. “ No kindness could improve your black heart, now adversity may do its work. Hence-

forth you shall possess nothing more than what the compassion of honest hearts may confer upon you, and that you may do no further harm, your hands shall remain crippled and powerless to the end."

"You, good people," turning to Melchior and Lizzy, "are now free from every engagement, and you will have no further need of me. Live happily and in peace!"

The apparition vanished, but Matthias remained lame and feeble, dependent upon the bounty of his cousins, till he died a miserable death, because his envious spirit embittered every favor which their kind hearts bestowed upon him.

But Melchior and Lizzy lived in happiness and peace many, many years.

THE WALKING STONES.

AWAY on the moor-side lies a poor, obscure little village. All around, the whole surface of the ground is nothing but a dry, barren waste, with no trees except an occasional clump of pines, and throughout the whole town there is not enough grass growing to pasture a pair of oxen, nor oats enough to fatten a pig.

But if the inhabitants have no corn or cattle, they have no lack of stones : for there are flint-stones enough lying about, to build a dozen cities, and yet leave enough to build a dozen villages beside, and on one side of the village there is a wide heath, where the dwarfs, or somebody else, have planted long, long rows of blocks of stone, close together, so that it looks like a street.

Between the little village and the moor, there

lived a man who passed for rich ; that is, he could every year slaughter a small hog for the family use, every Michaelmas he could buy a pair of wooden shoes for the winter, and he always had as much black bread as he wanted.

He was also considered the proudest man in the whole country, for he had refused his sister Rosa to all the young men in the place who lived by the labor of their hands. Among these, there was one young man by the name of Berend.

Berend had known Rosa from a little child, and had often played " Catch " with her, repeating as he did so, " I throw my kerchief here and there " ; and the older they grew, the closer became their friendship, till at last Berend thought he could not live without Rosa.

You may well think, then, that Martin's decided refusal went to his very heart. Luckily, Rosa paid little heed to her proud brother, but continued to be kind and friendly to Berend, and often when he passed by the house, she would smile pleasantly and begin to sing, " I throw my kerchief here and there " ; and then Berend would be reminded of the pleasant days of their childhood, and he would join in with

“I know not to whom I shall give it,
I’ll give it to my dearest,”

and then his heart grew so light, that he no longer felt sad or discouraged.

At length New-year’s time came. The weather was so cold, and the snow so deep, that it was not possible to go across the moor to the next village, where there was a band of music, and the young people were playing and dancing, but as Martin was a rich man, he thought he would have a little entertainment on Sylvester-day,* which occurs about this time; so he assembled all his relations, and invited several jovial young fellows besides, among whom was our friend Berend.

The master of the house prided himself in providing a liberal entertainment for his guests, and he had a plenty of oat-meal pudding with honey for sauce. While this delicious dish was preparing, all eyes were turned to the hearth, in eager expectation; Berend alone gazed on his beloved Rosa. At last the desired moment came, when the benches were drawn up to the table, the plates were set on, and the spoons were stuck like a

* Dec. 31, Old Style.

wreath all around the dish of hasty-pudding. But just as the guests were about to fall to, the door was forcibly pushed open, and an aged man entered, who wished them a blessed meal.

This man was a travelling beggar, who belonged to no particular place, and who inspired all the people with terror. A great many stories were told about him; he was said to have an evil eye, so that the cattle fell sick when he looked upon them; he could blast the corn in the ear, and he sold simple people salve for cuts and bruises. Indeed, many people affirmed that he had it in his power to change himself into a *Wehr-wolf*.*

But as he appeared to be a poor, needy beggar, Martin permitted him to sit down by the fire, and warm himself. He handed him a three-legged stool, and out of compassion gave him a dish from the table. The sorcerer ate, warmed himself, and then asked for a night's lodging. Martin opened the barn, there stood in the stall

* Those wolves that had tasted human flesh were called *Wehr-* or *Were-wolves* by the Saxons, who held them in peculiar dread, on account of their having acquired additional ferocity from that circumstance. — *Miss Strickland*.

an old gray ass and a meagre heifer. The beggar laid himself down between the two beasts to keep himself from freezing, and stuck a bundle of heath under his head. Just as he was beginning to grow sleepy, the clock struck midnight.

Then the old gray ass shook his long ears, and turned to the meagre heifer. "Now, coz," he began, "how have you been since last Sylvesternight, when we last saw each other?"

The meagre heifer made no answer, but shook her head, and cast a contemptuous glance on the beggar.

When the ass repeated his question again, the meagre heifer said, in a droll tone, "There's great pleasure in talking, when the only hour in which we can speak for the whole year is embittered by the presence of this miserable beggar."

"Fie! how proud you have grown! The dress makes no one better than he is; I think myself that my hide is getting rather speckled with years, and for that reason I despise nobody. It is very true that this beggar is a good-for-nothing fellow, and a wicked magician; but you see he is asleep, and cannot hear us."

"Yes," answered the meagre heifer, "all his

magic arts have not availed to make him rich. He toils and toils, but luck slips through his fingers. I could succeed better if I could only make use of the means, and in a few days there will be a fine opportunity, and close by here too."

"How so?" asked the gray ass.

"What! Is it possible that you do not know that once in every hundred years the stones on the moor go down to the sea-side to drink, and while they are gone, all the treasures of the earth lie open and exposed, so that you have nothing to do but to reach out and get what you want?"

"Ah! now I remember," said the gray ass, "that this takes place on Three-Kings'-night."*

"Well, this is the year that it falls upon."

"Yes," answered the gray ass, "but there is, nevertheless, a difficulty in the matter. In a few minutes the stones come back again, to take their old places for the next hundred years to come, and then those that they do not crush will have time enough to starve."

"Bah!" replied the meagre heifer; "one only needs to take a five-leaved clover with him, and

* 6th of January, Old Style.

they will do him no harm, and he can walk undisturbed through the midst of them."

"Well, then, there's another thing," continued the gray ass; "if one succeeds in bringing up the treasures, they soon change into dust and ashes."

"Who would be so stupid," replied the meagre heifer, "as not to put them into a chest, and lay a bit of witch-hazel on the top. If they are left thus until mid-day, they will remain just as they are, and whoever has them is richer than the whole village."

"Aha!" thought the beggar, who had not gone to sleep, but had only kept his eyes shut, while he was listening to this conversation between the ass and the heifer,— "Aha! my dear creatures," thought he, "many thanks to you! You make me richer than the proud Martin, and for the future I'll have no more to do with magic, which amounts to nothing."

He went to sleep, and at daybreak the next morning he went over the heath. There he found Berend breaking stones with a hammer.

"Holla! my friend," said the magician, "are you going to build yourself a cabin out of these stones?"

"Not that," answered Berend, "but I was cold, and I thought I could not do better than to collect some good stones to improve the road. I think I deserve Martin's thanks for that, for he always has the worst road."

"Do you care so much for Martin's favor?"

"I like to be friends with every body," said Berend, looking at the beggar with a surprised air.

The beggar laughed aloud.

"And have not you really thought any thing about Rosa in this matter?"

Berend did not know what to say. "Ah!" he said at last, "you know every thing, but I need not be ashamed; the maiden is so handsome and so good! Ah! if I only were not so poor!"

"If that is all," said the beggar, laughing, "I can help you. What should you think," said he softly, "if I should give you a purse full of bright dollars?"

"You?" cried Berend.

"Yes, I."

"And what do you want in return?"

"Nothing at all, only that you have a bit of courage."

“If that ’s all,” said Berend, “I have courage enough to go through fire and water.”

When the beggar found Berend so friendly disposed, he went on to tell him what would take place on Three-Kings’-night. But he said nothing at all of what was necessary to be done to avoid being crushed to pieces by the returning stones, because he wished to destroy him and marry the pretty Rosa himself.

So he told Berend to go to the moor on Three-Kings’-night, and there he, the beggar, would meet him. Berend kept his appointment. A full hour before midnight he was on the moor, and there he found the beggar seated with two sacks in his hands, and a third about his neck.

“Sit down a little while,” said the beggar-man, “and think over, while you are waiting, what you shall do when you hoist up gold and silver in the greatest abundance.”

Berend sat down on the ground, and said, “When I have silver enough I will marry my dear Rosa, and give her every thing her heart can wish.”

“And what will you do with the gold?”

“When I have gold enough, I will enrich all Rosa’s relatives, and my own too.”

“But you will obtain precious stones, too, which are more valuable than gold and silver; what shall you do with *them*?”

“Ah!” exclaimed Berend, and he sprang up for joy; “then no human being shall ever suffer before my eyes; I will help all the poor, and console the sick and feeble in their sufferings.”

The clock now struck twelve. Suddenly a tremendous roaring sound, like that of an earthquake, was heard on the moor, and by the glimmer of the stars they could see that the stone blocks had lifted themselves out of their places, and had begun their journey to the sea. They looked like an army of giants who were all drunken, they staggered so from one side to the other. They passed by Berend and the beggar, and vanished in the darkness.

“Come! come!” cried the beggar, “and fill your pockets full.”

Berend ran with the sorcerer to the place where the stone blocks used to stand. O marvellous! Instead of the stones, there were now wide openings like huge chests, and everywhere

lay in the greatest profusion, gold, silver, and precious stones.

Then, what a scramble! The sorcerer could not snatch enough, and Berend, whose pockets were soon filled, must now help him to fill the three sacks. They had just thrown the last handful into the last sack, and the sorcerer was shaking the bag to make the treasure settle down so as not to get out of the sack again, when a deep roar was heard in the distance. The stones had drunken, and they were now coming back from all sides to resume their old places again. Berend was the first to hear it.

“O Heaven! we are lost,” he cried; “there are the stones coming back!”

“What do I care about that?” said the sorcerer. “You ought to have looked out better for yourself, and have brought a clover-leaf with you. Look! the five-leaved clover opens the way for me.”

Berend gave himself up for lost. He would have tried to run away, but the sorcerer insisted upon his helping him drag up the last sack out of the deep hole. He had already reached the edge of the cavity, when the stone that belonged

there made its appearance, and threw poor Berend back again into the hole.

But at that very moment Berend heard the voice of the sorcerer, "My clover-leaf! my clover-leaf!"

In his struggle with the last sack, the clover-leaf had fallen from his hand, and behold! a draught of wind blew it towards Berend just as he was falling back into the hole. He quickly stretched out his hand, and luckily reached it just before the stone sunk down upon him and shut him up for a hundred years. Then the block of stone stopped and waited till Berend had climbed up out of the hole, and all the stones that met him stood aside and let him pass.

The sorcerer was caught in his own trap; the walking-stones strode unmercifully over him, and crushed him to pieces.

Berend went home, and hid his gold, silver, and precious stones in his chest. He knew nothing about what was to be done to prevent the whole treasure from turning to dust, but luckily he had all his life taken great pleasure in carving, and in the lid of his chest he had a great

many carved images filled in with hazel-wood. So his treasure remained to him.

A few hours afterwards, he went again to the moor. The stones all stood again in order; there was nothing to be seen of the sorcerer but blood-tracks on a stone, beside which the three full sacks stood untouched. You may well suppose that he quickly seized upon them and carried them home.

“Now,” thought he, “I am richer than any other man, and I will just let Martin feel my superiority a little.”

While he was considering what he had better do first, it was noon; and the sun had no sooner turned, than the three sacks, with their countless treasures, vanished all at once, changing into dust and ashes before his eyes.

Terrified, he ran to his chest;—he might thank his good luck that this was not empty also.

As it usually happens when any misfortune befalls us, we are ready to attribute it to this or to that, so Berend thought this had happened to him as a punishment for the pride which had crept over him in view of his riches.

This was not a bad idea, however, for it brought him to himself, and he became as unassuming and kind-hearted as before, although he was richer than the whole village, and Martin into the bargain.

Of course Martin no longer refused to give him his sister. He gave to the poor Berend, who from this time was called Berend the Rich, his sister Rosa to wife, and he hoped himself to derive much profit from this rich connection.

But therein he deceived himself. Berend was not avaricious, but he only gave to those that needed it. He built a pretty house for himself, bought lands and cattle, and with what he had left, he established a comfortable home for the aged and feeble.

So he lived with Rosa in happiness and peace; but this was much more attributable to his good heart and honest soul than to the treasure, because the happiness of man comes from within, out of his own breast, and not from gold and wealth alone.

And though every one may not have the good luck to be on the spot when the stones walk down to drink, and disclose all the treasures of

the earth, each one can nevertheless take care that no remorse crush his conscience like a heavy stone; and all else may be accomplished by untiring diligence, with which there will be no lack of success and prosperity.

THE WATER-WITCH.

A LONG, long time ago there lived a young peasant called William, and a pretty young maiden who was named Bella. They loved each other dearly, and they would gladly have married; but they were poor, and were forced to go out to service for a living.

One day William said to Bella, "I have driven the cows into the village for the last time. I cannot succeed here, so to-morrow morning I go into the wide world, to see if I can meet with luck anywhere."

Bella wept, but William was not to be turned from his purpose. He consoled his betrothed as well as he could, and promised to return soon.

"Now, then," said Bella, "since it must be so, go in God's name. But first we will share with



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each other three valuables which my father left behind him at his death."

She went to a closet, and brought out a little bell, a knife, and a staff.

"These three things have never been out of our family," said she. "This little bell has the gift of notifying by its clear ring the friends of the possessor, whenever he is in danger. The knife has the power of freeing from enchantment whatever it touches, and the staff guides one wherever he wishes to go. I will give you the little bell and the knife, and the staff I will keep myself."

William thanked her, and bade her farewell. Bella looked after him with tearful eyes, till he disappeared behind the mountains.

In the course of a few days, William came to a town in the vicinity of a lake. He sat down before the door of an inn, and he overheard two ass-drivers talking about the Water-witch on the island in the lake. William inquired who she was, and he was told that she was a fairy who lived on the island in the lake near by, and she was richer than all the kings together. Many people had gone thither to get possession of her treasure, but not one had ever returned.

William could not get this story out of his head, and he made up his mind to go to the Water-witch and see if he could not get enough from her just to buy a cow and a poor little pig.

When the ass-drivers heard this, they cried out with horror, and they tried to keep him back. But William was a little self-willed; he set off to the lake, and there he met a ferryman who took him over to the island.

In the centre of the island there was a large pond, wholly covered with water-lilies in full flower. In this pond lived the Water-witch. William walked around the pond, and discovered in the rushes a boat in the shape of a sleeping swan with its head under its wing.

This William thought very remarkable; he had never seen any thing like it before, and he climbed into the boat in order to examine it more thoroughly. But his feet had no sooner touched the bottom of the boat, than the swan seemed to awake, raised its head from beneath its wings, and, rowing with its broad webbed feet, swam swiftly away from the shore.

William uttered a cry of horror, but the swan still swam on and on, till the young man sprang

into the water to make his escape ; but the swan dipped under, caught him up again, and drew him down with her to the bottom of the pond. William was obliged to hold his peace, to keep from swallowing more water than was agreeable.

In this manner he was brought to the dwelling of the Water-witch. This was a palace of rare beauty, built entirely of muscle-shells. A crystal staircase led to it, every step of which gave out a musical tone as soon as a foot touched it. The palace was surrounded on all sides by wide-spreading gardens, containing forests of marine-plants, and meadows of sea-weed, where, in place of flowers, glittered the purest diamonds.

The Water-witch was reclining in the first apartment of the palace on a golden sofa. She was dressed in sea-green silk, her long black hair, intertwined with coral, reached down to her feet, and her face was of that delicate red and white which distinguishes the inner surface of the muscle-shell.

The young man, dazzled by her beauty, stood as if entranced, but the Water-witch rose from her couch, and kindly inquired who he was, and bade him welcome.

She conducted him into a second apartment, which was built entirely of pearl, and she placed before him eight golden beakers, with eight different kinds of wine.

William drank ; he had never tasted any thing so delicious, and he was perfectly charmed with the fascinating Water-witch. Then she showed him her countless treasures, and told him that all the precious things that fell into the sea she managed to get into her possession by means of her magical arts.

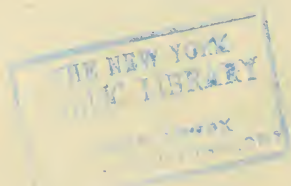
William was astonished ; the wine had made him feel very happy, and he said : “ Well, one who is so very rich is much to be envied. If I only had a thousandth part of these great riches I should be content.”

“ Half of them shall be yours if you wish,” said the Water-witch. “ Remain with me ; I will be your wife, and then you can be master of every thing you desire.”

The eight different kinds of wine were whirling in William’s head ; he forgot his promise to Bella, and accepted the proposal of the Water-witch without the least hesitation.

The Water-witch immediately commenced pre-





paring a delicious repast. She betook herself to a fish-tank in the garden, and called out, "Holla! the Miller!" "Holla! the Tailor!" "Holla! the Clerk!" and so on; and at each cry a little fish came swimming towards her, which she caught in a steel net until her net was full.

Then she went into a room adjoining the eating-room, put the fish into a golden pan, and began to fry them.

It seemed to William as if he heard the fish sob while they were frying. "What is that sighing in the golden pan?" he asked.

"It is the wood singing," said the Water-witch.

After a while, little voices began to whisper. "What is that whispering there?" he asked.

"The fat hissing in the pan," she answered.

But now the little voices cried out audibly and loud. "What is that cry?" said William.

"Those are the crickets in the hearth," said the Water-witch, and she immediately began to sing so loud that he could hear nothing more.

Still, what he *had* heard inspired him somehow with terror, and as he began to fear for himself, he began also to reproach himself for his fri-

volity, and he thought of his dear Bella. But the Water-witch brought him the fried fish, begged him to eat, and went to fetch twelve different kinds of wine.

William drew his knife out of his pocket and was about to commence operations; but hardly had he touched the golden dish with the knife which Bella had given him, than the spell of enchantment was broken, the fishes rose up and became little men. One was a miller with a meal-gray coat, the other a tailor with blue hose, the other a chapel clerk with long, flowing robes, and all cried out together, "William, save us, if you would be saved yourself!"

William was astounded. "Pray who are these little people?" he cried out.

"We are men like yourself," they answered. "We came here to get rich; but the day after our marriage to the Water-witch she changed us into fishes, and threw us into the great fish-tank."

"Alas!" cried William, struck aghast, "has the Water-witch had so many husbands already? and now are they all fishes?"

"You also soon will be a fish yourself, and will be eaten up by the first new-comer," said the little creatures.

William gave a spring, he seemed to feel himself already frying in the golden pan, and he was fain to make his escape before the Water-witch returned. But she met him at the door; she had heard all; she touched him with her wire-net, and changed him into a frog, and threw him into the tank. At this moment, the little bell which he wore on his neck sounded, and Bella heard the sound, though she was far, far away. It went to her very heart. She uttered a cry of anguish and said, "William is in danger!"

Without a moment's consideration, or stopping to inquire of any one, she put on her shoes and her Sunday suit, hung her little silver cross around her neck, and staff in hand she left the house. She went to a cross-way, and there she stuck the staff in the ground, and said:—

"Little staff, little staff, hear me!

Little staff, little staff, bear me

Over stone and stump,

Over copse and clump,

Over the river, and over the sea,

Far away through the air, little staff, carry me!"

Then the staff instantly changed into a saddle-horse, all nicely groomed, saddled, and bridled, with a blue plume on its forehead, and a fluttering ribbon behind each ear.

Bella mounted the horse without delay, and it started first on a walk, then a trot, and then a gallop, and at last it went so swiftly that ditches, trees, houses, and towers flew by her like the arms of a windmill. But still it did not go fast enough for Bella; she urged him on, saying:—

“The swallow is swifter than the horse, the wind is swifter than the swallow, the lightning is swifter than the wind, but my little horse, if you love me, fly swifter than them all!”

When the horse heard this, he flew as swift as a thought, and in a moment he was at the foot of a high rock, called the Deer’s Leap, which was so steep and high he could not get over it.

Bella knew very well what to do, and she immediately began to cry:—

“Little horse, little horse, hear me!

Little horse, little horse, bear me

Over stone and stump,

Over copse and clump,

Over the river, and over the sea,

Far away through the air, little horse, carry me!”

She had hardly pronounced the words, when huge wings came out of the horse’s sides, and it changed into an eagle, which brought Bella up to the top of the rocks. There he stopped, and

Bella espied a great nest in which sat a little black, crippled dwarf. The dwarf uttered a loud cry when he saw Bella. "Dear maiden," he cried, "save me, save me!"

"Save you?" cried Bella; "who are you, pray, my dear little man?"

"I am the husband of the Water-witch, who has enchanted me here, because I could not endure her witchcraft; and now I am condemned to sit here till somebody frees me, or till I have hatched out these stone eggs."

Bella began to laugh aloud. "Ah, my little setting hen, how can I set you free?"

"If you rescue William, who is in the power of the Water-witch ——"

Bella did not wait to hear that a second time. "Quick, what must I do?" she said.

"There are two things that must be done," replied the dwarf. "You must dress yourself like a man, so that the Water-witch may not recognize you, and then you must snatch away the wire-net which she wears at her girdle, and imprison her in it for ever."

"But I have no men's clothes," said Bella.

"We'll soon help you to them," answered the

little man, and he tore out four of his red hairs. He murmured softly a few words, and blew the hairs into the air; they instantly turned into four tailors, one of whom bore a cabbage-head, the second a pair of shears, the third a needle, and the fourth a tailor's goose. They quickly seated themselves around the nest, crossed their legs, and began to make an entire man's suit for Bella.

Out of the first cabbage-leaf they made a beautiful coat, out of the second a long vest, two others gave the flowing trousers, the heart served for a hat, and the stump for shoes.

Bella looked in her new dress like a nobleman.

She received a few more directions from the little man, mounted her eagle, and betook herself to the island of the Water-witch. Here she changed the eagle into a walking-staff, and suffered herself to be brought by the swan to the dwelling of the Water-witch.

The Water-witch did not recognize Bella, and at the sight of the young man in silk and satin, she was greatly delighted. She brought Bella into the pearl room and served her with wine. Bella found William's knife on the table, and she stuck it into her girdle. Then she went with the



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Water-witch to walk in the garden, and they both stood beside the fish-tank. Bella leaned over the little fishes, wholly beside herself with delight, and when the Water-witch invited her to remain with her, she said, "Yes, if you will permit me to fish a little in the tank."

The Water-witch suspected no harm, she gave her the net which hung from her girdle, and said, laughing, "Now let's see what you will catch."

Bella threw the net over the Water-witch with a cry of joy. "Infamous witch, become in appearance what you are in heart!"

The Water-witch shrieked, but she was soon silenced, for in a few minutes she was changed into an odious mushroom. Bella drew the net close together over the mushroom and threw it into a deep well, which she filled up with heavy stones. Then she hastened back to the fish-tank.

But the fishes had already come up out of the water, and in a long procession were wriggling along in an upright position towards Bella, crying out, "That is the nobleman who has rescued us from the steel net and the golden frying-pan."

Bella took the knife in her hand. She had observed close at her feet a frog who wore a little

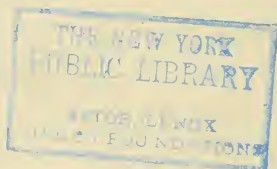
bell around his neck, sighed heavily, and pressed his two front claws upon his heart. She touched him with the knife; the frog turned into a man, who was no one else than William. Then she touched the fishes, and they immediately changed back to what they were before.

When she had done all this, the little man from the Deer's Leap made his appearance; he sat in his nest as in a carriage, and the six stone eggs had been changed into as many beetles, and were drawing the carriage.

He thanked Bella a thousand times, and led her and William to the treasure-chamber, which was entirely filled with gold and precious stones. Both filled pockets, hats, and handkerchiefs brimful; then Bella changed her staff into a winged carriage which was large enough to hold them both, and which took them back to their native village.

Now they could get married; but instead of a little cow and a poor little pig, William bought all the land there was to be sold, and all the cattle, horses, sheep, and goats there were to be had, and they built a splendid house, and lived a long life in happiness and peace.





THE BAGPIPER.

THERE was a consecration-festival held in the neighborhood, and the music and dancing continued far into the night. But when the stars, brightly sparkling, and the moon high in heaven warned the revellers that it was time to break up, the inhabitants of the different villages joined company, and took their way homewards.

The village lasses 'wore pewter rings on their fingers, which their friends had given them at the fair, and the jovial village lads went on before, singing at the top of their voices. But their merriment was at its greatest height when Leonard was one of the party.

Leonard was the merriest and the most famous piper in that part of the world; he never knew what it was to be out of spirits, he played up at

every dance, and he was always the most pleased of the whole party. Whenever there was a dance or a wedding he always came down from the mountains with his bagpipe, and he would play the livelong night.

He was never tired of playing, but he was also never tired of drinking; and if it had not been for the sake of his music, people would not always have been so glad to see him, for when he had drank a great deal, according to his usual custom, he became insufferable, for he did nothing but rave and swear.

At these times he would swear by all that was dear that he would remain a merry bagpiper till his end, and if he ever felt that he was going to die, he would drink deep, as long as he could, and mock death with the last wail of his bagpipe.

He had gone on with his usual recklessness on this occasion, or, if possible, he had been even wilder and more jovial than ever.

Warning and persuasion were of no avail. "Leonard, beware for your own sake," his friends cried, in vain. He cursed and swore high and dry that he would die drunk, and in the midst of music and dancing, and no otherwise.

This time he preceded the homeward-bound troop. His bagpipe squeaked and whistled all the way, and the lads sang in their Swiss fashion, and the white dresses of the lasses glimmered in the moonlight.

When they came to the cross-way, where the roads parted, the bagpiper took the right hand road, which led up to the heights.

The maidens stopped short and shrieked out, "Where are you going, piper? Here, the left-hand road, that goes round through the valley!"

Leonard pointed to the right, where the tower of the village church could be seen in the moonlight.

"Shall we not go this way?" he asked. "I thought it was nearer over the heath; why should we go so much out of our way?"

The maidens replied, "It is not safe to go over the heath, bagpiper; the dwarfs haunt the place in the night, and it is very seldom any one passes over the heath in the night-time without getting into trouble."

Leonard burst into a hearty laugh. "Pray, what harm can the dwarfs do to any body?"

"They force you to dance, and they can do you great harm."

“Ha ! ha !” laughed Leonard again. “I have wandered about alone many a night, over mountain and valley, over cross-ways and even by the gallows, but nothing has ever happened to me yet. I should like right well to meet with the little people, for they are said to own a great deal of silver and gold, and it would be no bad thing if I filled my knapsack full. Where is the way to the dwarfs ?”

“Leonard ! Leonard !” cried the maidens, “be not so foolhardy ; he who plunges headlong into danger only rushes upon his fate. If you go to the dwarfs, you’ll have to dance till your breath is wholly gone.”

“Dance ?” replied Leonard, “that’s just what I should like. Pray, have the little people any musicians to play for them ?”

“They have the wind that whistles over the heath for their piper, and the night-birds join their songs by way of accompaniment.”

“They cannot dance very well to such music as that ; the little people ought to know for once how well one can dance by a bagpipe. Farewell, if you will not go with me. I’m going over the heath.”

With these words he seized his bagpipe, played up a merry tune, and strode boldly up the heights which led to the heath.

The maidens and their companions raised a loud, lamenting cry, and hastened away.

Leonard strode fearlessly on through the moonlight, playing all the time on his bagpipe; the farther he went the more jolly he grew, and the squeaking tones of his bagpipe screamed shrill through the night air. When he had got to the middle of the heath, he saw huge blocks of stone that rose up in the pale moonlight, and not far from these were the dwellings of the dwarfs.

Leonard kept on playing louder and louder, till all at once he perceived a sound, at first like the soft murmur of a brook, then louder like the rushing of a torrent, and at last deep and fearful like the roar of the breakers. He could hear low, titting laughs, suppressed whispers, and at length shuffling steps through the sand.

The piper held his breath. He thought all this very strange. He looked anxiously to the right and the left: the whole heath was alive and stirring, and moving in every direction with something, he could not see what, for the moon was just then covered by a cloud.

All at once the moon shone out, and Leonard cried out aloud with terror. On the right and on the left, before him and behind him, everywhere, as far as his eye could reach, the heath was covered with dwarfs, and all were rushing towards him.

Leonard turned back, and would have taken to his heels, but the dwarfs everywhere blocked up his way, and called out with their grasshopper-like voices: "This is the jolly piper, Leonard, who is come to play for us to dance."

Leonard struck about him, and tried to keep off the dwarfs, but they cried out, "You belong to us, and now you shall see come to pass what you have always declared should happen. Play up and dance with us."

All resistance was vain, an invisible power constrained him; he put the mouth-piece of the bagpipe to his lips, and began to play and to dance in spite of himself. The dwarfs whirled with him in a circle, and every time he tried to stop, they shouted, "Play away, jolly piper! play and dance as we do!"

So it went on the whole night. But the paler grew the stars, the weaker grew the tones of the

bagpipe, and Leonard could scarcely lift his feet from the ground; but when the day dawned and the cocks began to crow, the dwarfs vanished and all became still.

The jolly mountain piper fell breathless to the ground. The bagpipe dropped from his mouth, his hands fell powerless at his side, and his head sunk heavily upon his breast. All around him in the air resounded a kind of whispered song:—

“Sleep, jolly piper, sleep! what you have so often sworn should happen, has come to pass. Your last moment was spent in music, dancing, and drunkenness.”

When the people came in the morning to look for the piper, they found him lying dead on the heath. The meeting with the dwarfs had been his destruction.

THE WASHERWOMEN ON THE HEATH.

A SOBER, temperate disposition is a very excellent thing. For he who gives himself up to gluttony and drunkenness runs all sorts of dangers, and he never knows whether he shall reach home safe or not. Not merely that the foot becomes too light when the head grows too heavy, and a man loses his balance, and stumbles and staggers about, but there are other risks to be run. When a man goes home in the night with too much under his hat, then the wine-spirits out in the midnight start into life, and open for him a pair of eyes such as he never has at other times, and then he sees all sorts of things which a sober man never sees or gives himself any trouble about. For the wine-spirits leave a man no rest, but with their wicked brothers and sisters change

themselves into Nixies and Kobolds, and thereby lure him on to destruction. Let every one take heed, then, that he goes home sober, or else he may fare like William, the hero of our tale.

William was a drunken swaggerer, who did no good his life long, but lay the whole day in the alehouse, and spent his money for beer, or wine, or brandy. This propensity he had inherited from his father, who often drank a mug more than was necessary to quench his thirst, and you know,

“As the old cock crows, so crows the young.”

His father had broken his neck in a drunken fit, and it was a real miracle that William still had the use of his limbs, he had had so many falls and mishaps himself.

In the morning he was the first at the alehouse, and at night he was the last. He never failed to be at a fair, and when the uproar was right boisterous, you might be sure William was there, and that he shouted and screamed the loudest of all.

His mother, his sisters, and his wife had all died in one short year, but this had not touched him in the least. He took possession of their

property, and only thought, "Well, I can drink the more!"

While the funerals were taking place, he sat behind his glass, and sung in an insolent tone:—

"What if I have no wife at home!

I 'll e'en go out in search of one."

And so said, so done.

The magistrate and other respectable men warned him, but in vain. He pursued the same mad course, and the more he was advised, the worse he behaved.

It happened that the village fair fell upon Walpurgis-day, the first of May, the time when the witches are abroad, and when they practise their wicked arts on the rash and unwary.

As at this time there is always a great deal to be done in the field, thrifty people took care to return home in good season. Not so with William. He had fallen in with a goodly number of sailors and dissolute people at an alehouse, and he was singing with the bar-maids all kinds of frivolous songs, so that he thought nothing about the time.

At midnight, all had filled their heads and bellies, and had lain themselves down to rest. Wil-

liam had had his share, but still he never had enough. Vexed that the others had left off so soon, he started off on his way home, singing through the streets all kinds of drinking songs, and he jodelled and shouted, and swept about right and left with his cane, so that if any one had passed him they would certainly have been hurt.

Thus he came to a crossway where the road divided into two. One road was longer, but in good order, and perfectly safe; the other was shorter, but it went over a heath, and beneath the gallows, and people who passed that way in the night-time had always heard singular noises, and in fear and trouble had reached the village on the full run.

William, in his tipsy mood, troubled himself about nothing, but took at random the left-hand road; and as he went along, he made such a clatter with his wooden shoes upon the stones, that he might have been heard a long way off.

The night was dark, neither star nor moon was to be seen in the sky; the wind swept over the heath with a blustering sound, the brook which flowed through it rippled over the stones

with a kind of dreamy monotony, and the thorn-bushes on the road-side trembled as a person does when overcome by terror; and between whiles, nothing was heard but the far-resounding steps of William, who took no heed of all this, but reeled along in his drunken, care-for-naught fashion.

As he came along by some old ruins, the weathercock creaked, and called out audibly to William: "Turn back! turn back!"

William did not hear, and went steadily on.

He came to the brook; the water murmured: "No farther! no farther! no farther!"

William groped with his cane for the crossing-stones that lay in the brook, and strode boldly over to the other side.

A little way off there stood an old oak-tree. The wind whistled fearfully in the branches, and whispered in William's ear: "Stay here! stay here! stay here!"

William took his cane, struck at the branches of the tree, switched off a couple of twigs, and went on.

At last he came to the place on the moor that had always had a very bad reputation. In the

neighboring village, he plainly heard the clock strike twelve. William commenced whistling a tune, but just as he was in the midst of it, such a strange sound met his ear, that he held his breath, and listened to see what it could be. The noise was that of a carriage, but the sound that the wheels made was peculiar, and before he could rightly make out what it meant, he could see a vehicle coming directly towards him. It seemed to be covered with a pall, and when William looked steadily at it, he found it was a hearse. It was drawn by six black horses, and Death sat in front as driver, with his hour-glass and scythe. The skeleton coachman cried out: "Make way, or die!"

"What are you doing here, friend Death?" cried William, boldly, as the hearse drove alongside.

"I attack and I cut down!" answered the skeleton.

"Then you are a robber and a murderer?"

"I am a reaper without mercy or forbearance."

"In other words, you are a brute or a fool. But pray what are you doing here?"

“ I am looking for a man named William,” replied the man of bones, and drove on.

William laughed aloud, and walked on.

When he had struck deeper into the heath, where the brook became wider, he saw two women hanging linen on the thorn-bushes.

“ By my faith,” cried William, “ these damsels are not afraid of spectres. Tell me, my dear little doves, what are you doing so late on the heath ? ”

“ We wash, we wring, we bleach,” answered both women at the same moment.

“ But what, pray ? ”

“ The shirt of the dead man who at this moment still walks and talks.”

“ A dead man ? Hey ? But I must know who he is.”

“ His name is William.”

William broke out into a loud laugh, as he had done before, and went stumping along by the side of the brook.

The farther he went, the plainer he heard a noise before him, which came from the washer-women on the heath, who in the broadest part of the brook were beating the linen in the water,

and not long afterwards William saw them himself. They washed and wrung out grave-clothes, and sang in a fearful way : —

“ We whirl in the dance,
In the darkness of night,
By the moon’s pale glance,
By the stars’ gleaming light.

“ In rain and in snow,
Winter’s cold, summer’s glow,
We wash and we spread
The clothes for the dead,
Who to-day, full of life,
Rejoice in health’s glow,
Like roses so red,
In the morning are dead.
O, woe to thee, William, O, woe ! ”

As soon as these strange people got a sight of William, they hastened up to him, and, holding out the linen they were washing, requested him to help them wring it out.

“ That is a trifling service, which no one would refuse to such pretty children,” said William, in his tipsy good-naturedness ; “ but one at a time, for a man has but two hands, and he cannot serve all at once.”

He laid down his staff, and seized the grave-

clothes of one of the washerwomen, and tried all the time to twist the same way that she did ; for he had presence of mind enough to remember, that this was the only way that he could escape being torn limb from limb. While he was thus wringing and twisting, the other women came up, and William thought he recognized among them his mother, wife, and sisters, and it seemed to him that they called out to him, in a fearful tone :—

“ Woe to you, you reckless drunkard ! You have rejoiced over our death, because you could drink up our property ; but the hour is come, when you have drunk the last drop you ever will drink.”

And then they shook out their dishevelled hair, which hung down long and wild behind them, and looked like a tissue of snakes, and they swung huge wooden mallets, with which they pounded the clothes they were washing, and with angry gestures they cried out more threateningly and fearfully than ever : “ Woe to thee, William, O, woe ! ”

This took away all William’s self-command. The sweat poured from his forehead, and as he

raised one hand to his head to push back his hair, he forgot to twist the same way with the washerwoman. The very moment that he wrung the other way, the cloth was torn from his hands, and every member of his body was wrenched to pieces by the Washerwomen on the Heath, and he fell senseless to the ground.

The next morning, the maidens who went to the city to carry their milk to market saw William lying in a hole under a bush on the heath. They supposed he had drunk too much brandy, and had fallen there on his way home. They went up to awaken him, and they saw that all his joints were dislocated. Full of terror, they ran into the village, and called some of the neighbors. The magistrate came also, for he thought some crime had been committed. But when he saw how twisted the whole body was, he said:—

“Let him alone, children. William is dead; he has been wringing grave-clothes with the Washerwomen on the Heath.”

THE GIFTS OF THE DWARFS.

A GREAT many years ago there lived an old man in a village, who, with his wife, used to go, year in and year out, to work for other people, and thus earn their living. Benedict was the poorest man in the village, but what was denied him in worldly goods was amply made up to him in two other endowments, one of which was very desirable and the other as undesirable; namely, he had a very excellent heart, and a terrible hump on his back. The first gained him many friends, and endeared him to every body, but by reason of the latter he often had to endure the unfeeling jests of the idle vagabonds of the streets. And indeed this hump was a little too big, for if Benedict wished to sit down, he must either take a chair without a back, or else let himself down

flat on the floor, because this burdensome embellishment of his was for ever in the way. Even his wife, who loved him dearly, and who before their marriage never thought any thing at all about the hump, in the course of a year began to think it was rather uncomely, and she would often say: "Ah! dear Benedict, how handsome you would be, if your back was a little more slender! I believe you would be the handsomest man in the whole village."

This observation Benedict had to hear repeated one day when he was returning with his wife from their day's labor.

They had been turning hay for a rich neighbor, and as they were not lazy hirelings, who ran away from their work as soon as the prayer-bell sounded, but were willing to labor till their work was done, they came home unusually late. The meadows in which they had been at work lay a long distance from the village. The stars already twinkled high in heaven, and the night was far advanced. Benedict must cross a wide heath, which was not considered safe by night. But he had never done harm to man or beast, and so he had a clear conscience, and was afraid of nothing.

“Come, Lisette,” said he, “let’s make haste, and get over the heath as soon as possible, for wicked dwarfs live there, who compel belated wanderers to dance till their breath gives out, and they are found the next morning lying dead in the open air.”

They walked hastily on. But when they came to the middle of the heath, where a great quantity of stone blocks were lying about, among which the dwarfs dwell, a long row of little kobolds rushed out upon them. Some of them carried great horns on which they blew, and the others, with hands joined, danced about, forming a great circle around Benedict and his wife, whom they thus inclosed in their midst.

“Alackaday!” cried Benedict to his wife, “we are lost! If the dwarfs force us to dance, it is all over with us.”

Dame Lisette clung tightly to her husband, and could not speak for terror.

The dwarfs were actually making preparation to force the good people to dance. But they had no sooner approached Benedict than they started back with a loud shriek, and cried in a singing tone: —



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“ Let him go, let him go,
The sickle protects him ;
Ah ! the sickle protects him,
Safe, away let him go.”

“ Aha ! ” thought Benedict, “ they are afraid of the sickle. In my whole life I never thought that that thing was of any other use than to cut grass.”

He drew his wife hastily along with him, and they soon reached their home in safety. But all night his thoughts were very busy. He thought about the hump which his wife had to-day for the third time found so ugly, and about the dwarfs who understood so many arts, and who were so afraid of his sickle. He said not a word, but in the morning, when he got up, he thought, “ I know what I will do.”

At evening, he contrived it so that he should go home alone. He waited till the stars glistened in the sky, like millions of precious gems, and nobody dared at that late hour to go near the heath. Then he took his sickle in his hand and went straight to the heath.

The dwarfs saw him coming, when he was a good way off, and they called out in a friendly way, “ See ! there comes Benedict ! ”

“ Yes,” answered Benedict, “ now I know that you live in my neighborhood, I have come to pay you a visit.”

“ That is brave,” cried the dwarfs. “ Will you dance a little with us ? ”

“ Do not take it ill, dear little people, but I am very short-breathed, and I could not hold out long.”

“ We will stop as soon as you say so.”

“ Will you promise me that ? ” said Benedict, who thought it would be no harm to have one round with them, for the sake of getting into their good graces.

“ We promise it,” answered the little people.

“ Swear it by my sickle ! ”

“ We swear it by your sickle.”

Benedict trusted the little people, stepped into the ring, and the dance began.

The dwarfs sang as they danced, but it was always the same thing over and over again : —

“ Monday, Tuesday, Wed-nes-day,
Monday, Tuesday, Wed-nes-day.”

Benedict bore this for a while, then he stood still and said : “ All due deference to you, little people, but your song is horribly monotonous ;

you always stick in the middle of the week, and you never get over the middle; with your permission I will add another line, but you must put up with it, good or bad, for I'm no rhymester."

"Excellent! let us hear," cried the dwarfs.

Benedict began to sing:—

Monday, Tuesday, Wed-nes-day,
Thursday, Friday, likewise say."

The dwarfs manifested the most lively emotion. "Bravo! bravo!" they cried, and crowded around Benedict. "Thou art an unequalled poet, and canst dance famously. Sing it once more!"

Benedict sang it over again:—

Monday, Tuesday, Wed-nes-day,
Thursday, Friday, likewise say."

The dwarfs whirled in a dizzy dance, as if mad with joy, then hastened again to Benedict and cried out all at once: "Hast thou any wish? What desirest thou? Wilt thou have riches or beauty? Thou mayst express one wish, we will fulfil it!"

"Are you in earnest?" asked Benedict, surprised.

"Sober earnest. Wish! Wish!"

“Now, then,” said Benedict, “just look here. I have a hump which I like none of the best, and it does not seem to please my wife any better; could you help me off with it?”

“Never fear that. Come here.”

They seized Benedict, and began to toss him like a ball from one to the other, till he had made the round of the whole circle.

“It’s all over with thee now,” thought Benedict, as he flew briskly through the air, “the dwarfs have betrayed thee!” But when he came back to the first dwarf, he placed him quietly on his feet again, and Benedict’s hump was gone! He had become so trim and handsome that his own mother would never have known him!

At first his wife would not receive him into the house at any rate. Benedict had to tell her how many shirts he had lying in his chest, and how many spots there were on his working-coat; at last she believed him, and allowed him to tell her how he had become so changed. She scolded him somewhat, though, because he had risked himself among the wicked dwarfs, but her joy at seeing him so beautified was plainly enough to be read in her face.

The hut that Benedict lived in belonged to his neighbor, a tailor, who was a very spruce little man, and very rich, but he was extremely avaricious, and stuttered a little. The tailor had been dunning Benedict for his house-rent for several days, and when he observed the change which he had undergone, he became envious of his good luck, for a covetous person cannot help feeling pain whenever any thing good happens to another, let the thing be ever so trifling or innocent. He thought it must have been brought about in some very unusual way, and he determined to sift the matter to the bottom.

So he went to Benedict, demanded the house-rent again, and threatened to turn him out of the house if he did not pay him on the spot. Benedict begged him to wait a couple of days till he received his wages, and then he should be able to discharge the debt. But the grasping tailor would give no pardon. At last, after long entreaty, he said, "Well, I will wait three days, if you will tell me how you got rid of your hump."

Benedict told him the whole story, and also imparted to him the secret of the sickle.

“Beauty and riches!” thought the tailor, “that will not be a difficult choice, and one can wish according to his fancy.”

As soon as the moon was in the sky, he went to the heath, and there he found the dwarfs. They were singing their old verse with the addition that Benedict had made to it, and they danced merrily in a circle. The tailor danced with them, and after he had gone round in the ring some time, he stopped and called out that he would like to add a line also.

The dwarfs stood still in their delight. “Sing!” they cried, “sing!”

They themselves began :—

“Monday, Tuesday, Wed-nes-day,
Thursday, Friday, likewise say.”

“Sing! sing!” cried they.

Stammering began the tailor:—

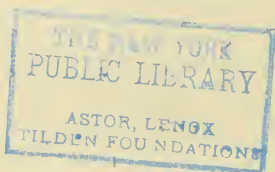
“Sa-Sa-Saturday.”

“Go on! go on!” cried the dwarfs.

“Sa-Sa-Saturday thereto.”

The tailor could get no farther, the sweat stood in big drops on his forehead, and his heart thumped like a hammer.





The dwarfs ran about wildly, and seemed to be angry with the tailor. At last they ranged themselves around him and said: "Since you have changed our verse somewhat, you shall have your wish. Choose between beauty and riches."

The tailor recovered fresh courage.

"Hear!" said he, "Benedict has chosen beauty; that you may not have to grant the same thing twice, I will take what Benedict did not wish for."

The dwarfs instantly seized him, and flung him from one hand to the other through the circle. When he had reached the last, his wish was fulfilled, but not in the sense that he meant, that he should obtain money and possessions, but the hump which Benedict did not wish for sat between his shoulders. With insults and abuse the dwarfs drove him from the heath. The tailor was raving over this disaster, and like most people, who are always ready to shift the blame of the mischief they have brought upon themselves, upon others, he cried out that Benedict had misled him, and he swore to be revenged upon him. He shut himself up two whole days,

and on the evening of the second day he sent word to Benedict, that, if he did not pay the rent the next morning, he would have him expelled from the house, and he would sell all that was in it.

Benedict had expected that the tailor would wait one day longer. When he received this message and heard the people in the village whispering to each other that the tailor now carried Benedict's hump, then he lost all hope. In great distress he took the sickle and went to the heath.

The dwarfs were again singing their song :—

“Monday, Tuesday, Wed-nes-day,
Thursday, Friday, likewise say,
Sa-Sa-Saturday thereto.”

Sad as Benedict was, he could not help laughing. “That does not jingle well at all,” said he.

“Ah! there is our Benedict! Yes, yes, that is a poor rhyme.”

“Well, let's see, perhaps the thing might be improved,” said Benedict, and he began to sing :—

“Monday, Tuesday, Wed-nes-day,
Thursday, Friday, likewise say,
Add the Saturday thereto,
Sunday we have nought to do.”

“Bravo! bravo!” cried the dwarfs. “Benedict is our deliverer! He has completed the verse that was given us, and we are released from our dance.”

They crowded round Benedict, and told him, that, as a punishment for some improper use they had made of their power, they had been condemned to dwell on this heath and dance the livelong night till some one should finish the verse, the first words of which were furnished them.

“How pleased they are!” thought Benedict, “now will be a good time to present my petition.” Then he complained to the dwarfs, that he was obliged to suffer for what they had done to the tailor, and that he would the next morning turn him out of the house and sell all his property if he did not pay the rent.

“Do not give yourself any uneasiness about that. We leave the heath now, and we shall gladly show ourselves grateful to our deliverer. Look! here between the stones lie twelve sacks; they shall be yours, take them and carry them to your house.” Benedict thanked them, took his leave, and went home with the sacks.

When he got home, he threw his heavy load on the floor, and called to his wife :—

“Kindle a fire, and fasten door and windows, so that our neighbor may see nothing of the riches I have brought home. Zounds, how heavy it was! There must be enough to buy three whole villages!”

The wife did as he said, then she hastened back, and opened one sack after another; in every one there was — nothing but sand, dry leaves, and pebble-stones. At this sight, she uttered a loud cry.

“There! see what thou hast! I have always told thee that nothing good ever came from the dwarfs. If it only does not bring more misfortune to our house”

Benedict stood stupefied with horror; in his fright the sickle which he still held fell from his hand. The handle was of hazel-wood, and it fell exactly into the sack. The dry leaves immediately changed into gold pieces, the pebble-stones into diamonds, and the sand into pearls. Benedict perceived now that the hazel-wood possessed peculiar powers, not merely to make a bad boy behave himself, but to change enchanted treas-

ures back again to what they were originally. He tried the same experiment with the remaining sacks, and became at once the richest man in the place, to the great vexation of the tailor, who would gladly have seen himself in Benedict's place, but in his greedy avarice had only brought upon himself a most unwelcome acquisition.

Observe now, content is far better than avarice.

THE ENCHANTED CITY.

TIME out of mind, there once lived a king, whom all the people loved and praised because he was benevolent and kind beyond measure. Unfortunately, however, he had a daughter who led a wild life, and who had left her father in order to get rid of his serious admonitions. This grieved the king exceedingly, but he could not remedy the evil; for though his daughter vexed him greatly, he loved her too much to take any severe measures against her.

One day the king was hunting with his retinue in a great wood, when they all lost their way, and at length reached the hut of a hermit. The king had heard a great deal about this hermit, that he was a man who understood wonderful things, and he rejoiced that he was so fortu-

nate as to meet him. The hermit received the king and his followers in a most friendly manner, and when he saw by their sad faces that they were hungry, he inquired of the king if he would not take a bit of luncheon.

The king replied, that he had not tasted a mouthful since morning. The hermit then called the king's cook and cup-bearer, led them to the spring, gave the cup-bearer a pitcher of water, and the cook a little fish out of the basin, and ordered them to make ready a repast for the king.

Cook and cup-bearer began to laugh aloud, and inquired if he thought they were beggars.

But the hermit replied, that it was all the same to them, and they had only to do as he bade them.

They made contemptuous faces, and then did as the hermit had commanded them. But how were they surprised, when, instead of water, golden wine flowed, and the little fish changed into many large and delicious trout. They ran hastily to the king, and informed him of the miracle.

The king ate, gave thanks, and begged the hermit to go with him to his court, and he would make him Chancellor. The hermit consented,

and the king assigned him a residence in the vicinity of the city in which the princess had established herself, because he hoped that the influence of the hermit might have a good effect upon her.

But the princess was a wicked enchantress. The city in which she dwelt was the most splendid in the world. It lay beneath the level of the sea, but the princess had summoned all the spirits which were under her authority to build high walls, to prevent the encroachment of the waters, and to erect the most splendid palaces and castles that could be imagined. All the people who lived in the city were rich as princes, but the princess wore around her neck a golden chain with silver keys, which were worth more than the whole city; because these silver keys locked up the flood-gates of the sea, which the princess herself went every day to open, to let the water into the city, in order that there might be no mistake or oversight by which the water should inundate the whole city.

The inhabitants of the city all being so very rich, became voluptuous and extravagant, and in their arrogance they committed all kinds of

crimes and iniquities of which human beings are capable. In this respect, the princess herself furnished them with an example, which all were eager to imitate. In her court there was continual feasting and banqueting, so that the fame thereof went forth into the most remote lands, and all the nobles and gentry came to witness the splendor, and the princess received them graciously till far into the night, then, when they attempted to depart, she caused them to be strangled and thrown into the sea.

The hermit had heard of all these proceedings, and had warned the princess against continuing such a course. But the princess believed that what he said came in reality from her father, and she therefore invited him to visit her, and threw him into a dark dungeon, and she warned the hermit not to let himself be seen at her court again.

Some days after this, there was a great banquet given, on account of a foreign prince, who had come a great many hundred miles to witness the magnificence of the princess. He was a tall man, arrayed in red satin, his beard was also red, and his eyes gleamed like glowing coals. The prince complimented the princess very much

upon the splendor of her court and the beauty of the wonderful city. She entertained him in her finest style, and at evening she invited him to dance.

The unknown prince danced with the princess, and during his flattering conversation she did not observe that he had stolen the silver keys. In the night, just as the princess was about to have the prince strangled and thrown into the sea, according to her usual custom, her people announced to her, that the prince was not to be found, though he had not left the castle.

The princess felt for her silver keys, in which lay, not merely her power over the flood-gates of the sea, but also her great magical craft, and remarked with horror that they were gone. Quite beside herself, she ran down the staircase, and met the foreign prince leading her father by the hand.

The princess also possessed a ring of nut-wood, with which she could practise a great many magical arts; this she reached for, to turn the strange prince into stone, but at that moment the prince became of enormous size, his red cloak and beard glowed like burning coals, and his eyes sparkled like wheels of fire.

With terrific voice, he cried out: "Accursed be thou, outcast of humanity! The measure of thy iniquity is full. Thy magical power is broken, and in this very night thy city with all that is therein shall be swallowed up by the waves of the sea. Accursed be thou, with thy whole city!"

He dragged away the king, whom he had freed, and who still wore the shackles on his hands and feet, opened the flood-gates of the sea, and brought the king up on the high land, without allowing himself to be moved in the least by his entreaties.

When they reached the high land, he stopped and relieved the king of his fetters, and pointed back to the city they had just left. The waters of the sea were rushing in; they had already reached the spire of the tower, they mounted visibly higher and higher, and in a few minutes all was overwhelmed.

The strange prince was no other than the hermit; he flung the silver keys into the deep abyss, conducted the king to his castle, and returned to his hermitage. Nothing more was ever heard of him, and the king died not long after.

Since that time, many thousand human beings have been born, and have died, oak forests have grown up and have passed away again, and yet the legend of the Enchanted City is known even to this day; and it is also added, that once in every five years, on the first night in May, when the clock strikes twelve, the castle and city of the princess emerge from the sea, that then walls mountain-high dam out the waters, and a door is opened to the entrance of the castle. Whoever then has courage to take advantage of the right moment and hasten into the fifth saloon of the castle will find there the ring of nut-wood, by means of which all his wishes may be gratified. But he must be sure to hasten, for when the last stroke of the midnight hour sounds, the spell is broken, the door closes, the floods press in, and all retreat is cut off for the next five years.

Well, there once lived, many, many hundred years ago, a young man named Kurd, who had much rather be idle than to work, and would gladly have become with one lucky stroke a rich man for life.

Kurd had heard the story of the Enchanted Castle from a strolling beggar, and he had

thought of nothing ever since but of getting possession of the nut-wood ring of the princess. He watched for four years every first May-night to see if the city rose out of the sea, and on the fifth year he went again on the scout. He tarried and tarried till it should strike midnight. At last, a clear ring was heard in the night air; it was the first stroke of the nearest town-clock, which announced the hour of midnight.

A joyful tremor ran over Kurd. Before his eyes arose walls mountain-high, and house-tops and tower-spires shot up in the air. By the light of the stars he descried an opening in the walls just before him, and a massive bridge by which he could cross over into the city. He started for the bridge upon the full run, and passed through the opening into the city. On his entrance he found every thing dark; farther on it became brighter and brighter, till he reached the palace, which seemed to float in light. Just as Kurd hastened up the broad steps, the fifth stroke of the midnight hour sounded.

Kurd entered the first saloon; enormous trunks filled with silver stood all around against the walls; but Kurd wanted something better than

silver, so he passed through. Then sounded the sixth stroke.

He found a second saloon in which stood huge coffers with much more gold than a hundred acres can yield of barley-corns; but Kurd disdained the gold, he had a mind for something better. He went on through the apartment. Then sounded the seventh stroke.

In the third room, there were real pearls, that lay around like sand on the sea-shore; but these could not entice Kurd, who knew there was something more precious yet to be had, and who still pushed on. Then sounded the eighth stroke.

The fourth apartment glittered and sparkled with nothing but diamonds; but he restrained himself, recollecting that, if he once got possession of the nut-wood ring, he could have diamonds, pearls, gold, and silver at his pleasure. As he hurried into the last room, the ninth stroke sounded.

But when Kurd entered the fifth and last saloon, he stood transfixed with astonishment. Before him in the centre of the room hung the ring of nut-tree-wood, yet he hardly marked the precious treasure, for before him and on both sides

he espied countless maidens more beautiful than he had ever seen before, and every one held in one hand a wreath of flowers which she extended towards him, and in the other a golden cup filled with wine, the delicious odor of which invited him to drink.

Kurd, who had resisted the silver, the gold, the pearls, and the diamonds, could not withstand the charming maidens. The tenth stroke sounded, — he heard it not.

The eleventh, — Kurd remained motionless, lost in the sight of so much beauty.

Now, — the twelfth stroke, — like thunder in the mountains, it roared. Kurd started from his stupefied bewonderment, — the figures before him changed into marble statues, and a rushing sound like that of mighty waters came upon his ear. He tries to go back, the doors are closed, dark night comes on, and with horror he feels his limbs stiffening into stones. No one ever saw him again, neither since that time has any one ever dared to enter the Enchanted City; the sea has rushed over it for centuries, and the force of the waves has long since utterly destroyed it.

SILLY PETER.



PETER was called throughout the place nothing else than Silly Peter, and he put up with this, because he *was* in fact a little simple, though in his own way he was shrewd enough, only he kept this to himself, and, besides, the people meant no harm by this nickname. On the contrary, they rather liked him, and they always gave him the remains of their dinners. He used to go all around the town, with his mouth set wide open, and his great, staring eyes glowering about, without any particular business of his own. His parents had died when he was quite young, and he had grown up wild and untutored, but still he never did any harm to any body. When he was thirsty he went to the well and drank, when he was hungry he went to the first house-

wife that he saw standing at her door and ate of what was left from her table, and when he was sleepy he crept into a barn and went to sleep in the straw. Considering his circumstances, Peter was not so badly dressed after all. He had an excellent pair of linen trowsers that lacked nothing but the waistband, a jacket with one sleeve, and half a cap which had once been new. And when he had eaten, he was always in high spirits, and he sang merrily out of the joy of his heart. There was only one thing that he knew how to do well, and that was to trill like a singing-bird, and he could imitate the lark best of all. So he lived just like a bird, eat and drank whenever he could get the wherewithal, and when he was sleepy he went to sleep.

At the time that Silly Peter lived, the earth looked very different from what it does now. There were then great woods, many hundred miles long, and ancient knights and great giants lived in those days, and there were a great many other wonderful things.

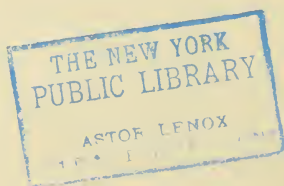
One day, it was long after the noon-bell had rung, and Silly Peter felt excessively hungry, as he came by a very neat farm-house; so he stepped in and asked for something to eat.

The farmer's wife was just washing up her dishes as Peter came in. When she heard his voice, she left her work, and set before him the little half-tub into which she had scraped the fragments that were left of the dinner, and said : " There, my poor little Peter, eat as much as you want, and say a paternoster for our swine, that they may fatten well."

Silly Peter let himself down on the ground, took the tub between his knees, and searched about in it for something to eat; but he found very little, for there had been a great many forks in the plates and a great many spoons in the bowls that day, so that there was not much left for the tub. However, when Peter had done, he licked his fingers and murmured a prayer of thankfulness, as if he had never eaten any thing so delicious in his life. " There was some excellent dumpling there," said he; " it must have been made of the finest flour and prepared by one of the best of cooks."

The farmer's wife was just going away, but she caught these words, and she felt very much flattered. She turned back to Silly Peter and said : " Poor boy ! wait a moment and I'll bring you a bit of bread."





She actually brought him out a thick slice of bread, with a nice, delicate crust, and most delicious crumb. Silly Peter bit into it like a hungry wolf, and he cried out that there could be but one baker in the world, who knew how to bake such bread as that.

That flattered the farmer's wife still more. "Hem!" thought she, "how he would relish it, if he had a bit of my fresh May butter to eat with it!" And she went quickly into the house, and brought out a piece of her best butter, which Silly Peter accepted with no little delight.

Now, how he extolled the farmer's wife and her butter! "In the whole village, and for miles around, there was not another person who understood making such butter as that! How many things were necessary to good butter! clean vessels, the most careful attention to the cows, rich pasture,—verily, a bit of beef from cows that gave such butter must be delicious!"

The increasing self-complacency of the farmer's wife led her to bring Silly Peter a nice piece of beef. This went on till she went in again and again, and brought the delighted Peter as much as he could eat.

A horseman now came galloping along; he stopped at the door and asked the farmer's wife the way to Glasburg Castle.

"Heavens!" cried the frightened woman, "are you going to Glasburg?"

"Yes," replied the horseman, "I have come for that purpose from distant lands, and I have ridden day and night for three months, till I have arrived here."

"And what are you going to do in the Glasburg?" inquired the woman.

"I am going to procure the golden vase and the diamond spear."

"Are they such very precious things?" said Silly Peter, putting in his question.

"Far more precious than all the crowns in the world, for the golden vase procures for its possessor every thing that he can desire to eat and drink, and has, at the same time, such magical power, that whoever drinks from it is immediately cured of whatever disease he may have, and it even awakes the dead to life, if it is put to their lips."

"But the diamond lance breaks in pieces and destroys every thing that is touched with it."

“And to whom do the golden cup and the diamond lance belong?” said Peter, greatly wondering.

“A great magician,” answered the farmer’s wife, “who lives on the Glass Mountain; he may be seen every day on the heath below there, at the edge of the woods, where he sits on his black horse, followed by a colt of thirteen months. But no one ever dares to go near him, because in his hand he carries the lance from which there is no deliverance.”

“Yes,” said the strange knight, “but in his castle of Glasburg he has no use for it. As soon as he comes home, he shuts it up in a subterraneous vault which no key will fit. I intend to seize him in his own castle.”

“Ah!” said the woman, “you will never succeed, for many hundred knights have already tried it before you, but not one has ever returned.”

“That is not unknown to me, dear woman, but all these men had not, like me, received counsel from the hermit, the deadly foe of this giant; *that* will assist me.”

“And what did the hermit tell you?” said Silly Peter.

“He told me every thing that I must do. First, I must ride through the Enchanted Forest, where all kinds of enchantments would be put into operation to make me lose my way, and to fill me with terror. Almost all who have gone before me have suffered themselves to be beguiled, and have perished in the wood, of hunger, cold, or exhaustion.”

“And what if you get through the wood, or farther?” inquired Silly Peter.

“When I get through the wood, I meet a dwarf with a fiery sword, with which he sets every thing on fire that it touches. This dwarf keeps guard over an apple-tree with golden fruit, one apple of which I must have.”

“And after that?” inquired Peter.

“After that I find the Laughing Flower, guarded by a lion whose mane is of poisonous adders, I must pluck the Laughing Flower, and then swim through the Lake of the Dragon, in order to fight with the black giant, who has the iron nine-pin ball that never fails its aim, and always returns again to its master. Then I come first into a pleasure-garden, where all kinds of expensive amusements will seek to seduce me;

but I must touch nothing, but hasten to the river which has but one fording-place. On the other side, I am to find a lady dressed in black, whom I am to take up behind me on my horse, and learn from her what I am next to do."

The farmer's wife attempted to dissuade the knight from his purpose; but he said those were things which women did not understand, but took her directions as to the road, and, giving the spur to his horse, he soon vanished behind the trees of the forest.

The farmer's wife sighed with regret, she gave Peter some more bread-crusts, and bade him go on his way.

Just as she was sending him away, her husband came in from the field. He had just sent away his herd-boy, and was in want of another. When he saw Silly Peter, it occurred to him that he might engage him for a cow-herd.

He asked him if he would stay on the farm, and take care of the cows. Now Peter much preferred to devote his time to taking care of himself, and nobody understood better how to while away the whole day in doing nothing than he.

But the taste of the bacon, the beef, the butter,

the fresh bread, and the delicious dumpling that he had relished so much, still lingered in his mouth, so he took up with the offer.

The man immediately led him out into the field, counted out the cows before him, cut a switch for him to drive the cows with, and told him to drive them home at sunset.

Thus was Silly Peter all at once turned into a cow-herd; he must see that the cows did no harm to the fields, and he had to run sometimes from the white to the brown, and from the brown to the black, to hinder them from breaking through and getting into the cultivated lands.

While he was going about in this manner, from one side to the other, he heard all at once the tramp of a horse, and looking around, he saw the giant with the diamond spear, riding through the wood on a black horse, followed by a colt of thirteen months. Around his neck hung the golden cup, and the diamond spear flashed like a blaze.

Full of terror, Peter hid himself behind a bush. The giant passed along and rode quietly on his way. When he had gone, Silly Peter hastened out of his hiding-place, and looked about for the horse's tracks, in order to ascertain the direction

the giant had taken. But that was impossible.

In the mean time there came an immense number of knights seeking the way to Glasburg. Peter never saw any of them return again, but every day the giant appeared at the edge of the wood, where he went to ride for pleasure. Peter at last became accustomed to the sight of him; he no longer concealed himself when the giant came along, but he looked at him, and at last with a somewhat envious glance; for the oftener Peter saw the diamond spear and the golden cup, the more anxious he became to possess them both. But as Peter was, in this respect, like most people, that is to say, like an old woman, he continued to wish and to envy.

One evening, however, Peter was alone, as usual, in the meadow, when all at once a man with a long white beard made his appearance, and remained standing by the edge of the wood.

Peter thought it might be another knight who was about to attempt the adventure; and he asked him if he sought the way to the Glasburg.

“I have no need to seek it,” said the man, “I know it already.”

“Then you have returned back safe, and the giant has not killed you?”

“He has nothing to fear from me,” answered the man with the white beard, “for I am Bryak the Sorcerer, and the brother of the giant. When I wish to visit him, I come here and call for the black colt, because otherwise I could not get through the Enchanted Wood without losing my way; but the colt knows the way.”

After saying this, he drew with his finger a threefold circle in the sand, murmured a few words softly, and then cried:—

“Colt so young, colt so black,
Come quick and take me on thy back.”

And the colt made its appearance immediately. Bryak threw the halter and bridle over him, swung himself upon his back, and rode away into the wood.

Peter said nothing of this adventure to any body, but he thought enough about it himself, for he knew now that the first condition of reaching the Glasburg was the black colt. But alas! this knowledge helped him very little, for no matter how many times he drew the three circles in the sand, and called out:—

“Colt so young, colt so black,
Come quick and take me on thy back,” —

the colt never appeared.

It was necessary for him to think of some other means of getting at the colt, and then it was a most hazardous affair to obtain the golden apple, and the Laughing Flower, to escape the unerring ball of the black giant, and to pass safely through the pleasure-garden. But not the less did the golden cup and the diamond spear take possession of Peter's mind.

Peter thought much and long over the matter, to contrive how he should bring it about. He could not obtain these things by violence, he was too weak for that, so he must turn his thoughts to stratagem. But the difficulties in the way did not give him any anxiety. “It is the same with them,” said he, “as it is with medlars; when they hang unplucked on the trees, they are hard and sour, but if one gathers them, with a little straw and some patience, they grow soft and well-flavored.”

So he delayed taking any measures for obtaining the black colt till the hour when the giant was in the habit of riding by on his way to the

wood. Then he had ready a halter and bridle and a hempen noose, filled a sack with feathers and birdlime, took with him the bacon which he had saved from his meals for several days, and a piece of bread, which he rubbed into crumbs, and strewed over the route which the giant with his horse and his thirteen month's colt were accustomed to take.

Giant, horse, and colt appeared as usual, and crossed over the meadow, but the colt dropped its head to the ground and snuffed, it scented the crumbs, and remained behind to eat, and was soon alone. When the giant was too far off to notice it, Peter slipped softly up to the colt, threw the noose over it, put on the halter and bridle, swung himself upon its back, and suffered the colt, who knew the way, to carry him to Glasburg.

The colt took his way straight to the Enchanted Wood, where he struck into the wildest path, and flew through it like the wind. Peter trembled like an aspen-leaf. Around him, in the Enchanted Wood, rose up a thousand horrible figures. Sometimes an abyss opened before his eyes, into which he thought that he and his colt must

fall together and break their necks; sometimes the trees would burst into flames, and he believed he should be burned to death; or frightful rocks would be rent asunder, and look as if they were going to fall upon him and crush him to pieces; and he heard moans and shrieks and wild ravings all around him, till his hair stood on end with horror. But Peter kept repeating to himself that it was only magic, and when his fear grew too strong for him, he pulled his cap over his eyes and let the colt go as he would. Thus he came to a level plain. Here the enchantments ceased, and Peter raised his cap and looked about him. It was a waste, desolate place. All around lay the bones of the knights who had attempted to reach the Glasburg; here they lay beside their horses, a prey to the ravenous wolves.

At length Peter reached a meadow which was entirely overshadowed by one single apple-tree, so richly laden with fruit that the branches hung down to the earth. Before the tree stood the dwarf with the fiery sword, which burned every thing that it touched. When he saw Peter he uttered a shrill scream, like that of the sea-gull when a storm is threatening, and swung his fearful sword.

Peter gave himself no uneasiness, but drew off his cap very politely. "No offence," said he to the dwarf, "I am going to Glasburg by order of the lord of the castle."

"You!" cried the dwarf, "pray who are you?"

"I am Silly Peter, and I am to take service with the lord of Glasburg. Has he not said any thing to you about it?"

"No," said the dwarf, "and I believe you are an impostor."

"With permission," answered Peter, still holding his cap humbly in his hand, "that is not my business, I am a bird-catcher, I catch birds and tame them. But do not detain me, for the lord of Glasburg is expecting me, and he has given me his colt, so that I might get here the quicker."

The dwarf saw that it really was the giant's colt, and he thought it must indeed be so. Yet he thought it not amiss to ask Peter what he was going to do at the Glasburg.

"Catch birds," answered Peter; "what else? The sparrows are devouring all the cherries on the trees, so that the people can hardly save any of them."

"And how will you destroy them?"

Peter showed him his noose, and told him no bird could hop away with that.

“That I must see myself,” said the dwarf; “I have numberless sparrows here, catch me a quantity of them.”

Peter was delighted. He pretended to tie his colt to a branch of the tree, but instead of that, he fastened one end of the noose to it, and called to the dwarf to take hold of the other end while he climbed the tree. Then he snatched the noose out of his hand, and threw it over him. Thus was the dwarf taken prisoner. He roared with rage, and struggled to free himself, but the noose was of threefold twisted hemp, which resists all enchantment. Peter sprang quickly on his colt, plucked an apple from the tree, and galloped away.

After the meadow came a level field, and beyond that a great flower-garden. There grew all kinds of beautiful flowers, but in the midst of the garden rose one flower of surpassing elegance: that was the Laughing Flower. Peter gazed upon it with longing eyes, but the lion with the snaky mane was running round before the entrance, rolling his glowing eyes like a pair of mill-wheels, and gnashing his teeth furiously.

Peter drew up the colt and pulled off his cap, remembering the old saying, that, "with the hat in the hand, one may go through the whole land." Then he saluted the lion very politely, and asked him if that was the right way to the Glasburg.

"And what do you want there?" said the lion in a terrific voice.

"Most gracious Mr. Lion," said Peter timidly, "a lady, whom the lord of Glasburg knows very well, has sent me to bring him this sack full of larks."

"Larks!" said the lion, smacking with his tongue; "it is a long time since I have tasted any. Have you many?"

"This whole sack full," replied Peter, showing the sack of lark's feathers and birdlime.

In order that the lion might the more readily believe him, he began to imitate the song of the lark.

The song made the lion more delighted than ever. "Show me your birds," said he, "I will see if they are fat enough for our master."

"Right willingly," said Peter, "only, if I open the sack, they will fly away."

"Well, just let me peep in a little."

That was just what Peter wanted. He took his sack and opened it a very little; the lion poked his head in to snatch a mouthful, and was stuck fast in the feathers and birdlime. Peter pulled the sack over his head, ran to the flower-garden, broke off the Laughing Flower, and rode off.

It was not long before he came to the Dragon Lake, through which he must swim. He was hardly in the water before the dragon came rushing along to swallow him up. It was of no use to take off the cap here, nor was there a word to be said to the dragon, who opened his jaws and snapped at Peter. But Peter had the bacon ready which he had brought with him, and he threw a piece of it into the open jaws of the dragon, and the colt bore him swiftly away before he had time to swallow it.

Now he had only to encounter the black giant with the iron bowling-ball. Peter saw him sitting close by the landing on the opposite shore. The giant's feet were fettered to the rocks; there he sat, and held in his hand the unfailing ball, which always came back to its master. All around his enormous head were six great eyes,

that watched by turns, so that while two of them slept the other four were constantly spying about.

Peter bethought himself that it would not do to let himself be seen, because as soon as the giant espied him he would throw his ball, before he would have time to say a word to him. So he slipped off the colt's back and crept along behind the bushes till he had got very near the black giant. Luckily the two eyes that were turned towards Peter were asleep. Peter sat down very softly. He began to imitate the songs of different birds, and at first he sang like a lark; then one more of the giant's eyes fell asleep, completely ravished by his song. Then he began to warble like a nightingale; the giant stretched and yawned, and after a little while two more eyes closed in sleep. Now Peter drew his flute out of his pocket, and played upon it an air so melting, so charming, that the last eye sunk in slumber and the whole giant was asleep.

Swiftly sped Peter to his colt, held his rein lightly till he had passed by the giant, and at length happily arrived at the entrance of the pleasure-garden. This was a most delightful garden, filled with enticing fruit, flowers, and

fountains. The fountains threw up jets of delicious wine, the flowers sang with most bewitching voices, and the fruits were all kinds of dainties, which flew towards him of their own accord. At the end of each shaded walk stood tables as richly spread as if kings had been going to feast there ; the smell of rich pastry regaled the nose, pompous servants offered the best and the handsomest of every thing, and charming maidens presented wine, and seemed ready to join in the dance.

That was a heavy trial for Silly Peter. All his former perils were trifling compared with this. He snuffed the delicious odors and his mouth watered for the tempting delicacies ; his eyes were riveted on the flying fruits and the inviting banqueting-tables, and if he had not that very moment remembered the diamond spear and the golden cup, Peter would certainly have surrendered here.

But he made use of his previous precaution of pulling his cap over his face, drew his flute out of his pocket and played so merrily that he could no longer hear the seductive songs of the maidens or the flowers ; and, thanks to the fleetness of

his horse, he withstood this most dangerous trial to his food-loving belly.

As he came out of the garden, the Glasburg gleamed upon his sight. In his joy Peter had almost forgotten that, in order to reach the castle, he must cross the river with only one ford, but he was reminded of this by seeing a lady in black sitting on a high rock on the other shore.

The colt knew all the ways, so of course he knew the way to the ford. Peter forded the river and approached the lady. She was dressed in black satin, and she was as yellow as a dancing Gypsy girl.

Peter drew off his cap very obsequiously, and asked her if she would like to be taken over the river.

"I have been waiting for you," said the lady; "come nearer, so that I can get up on the saddle behind you."

Peter did as she said, took her up behind him on the colt, and rode again through the river.

When they were in the midst of the river, the lady said, "Do you know who I am?"

"I crave your pardon," said Peter, "but judging from your dress, you must be noble and powerful."

“Noble,” replied the lady, “I certainly am, because my lineage dates from the beginning of the world, and powerful I am also, because all men must yield to me if I will.”

“And pray what is your name?” said Peter.

“My name is the Plague!”

At these words Peter sprung up in terror from the horse, and was about to throw himself into the river, when the Plague said:—

“Keep your seat quietly, Peter, I will do you no harm; on the contrary, I think I may be needful to you.”

“Is it possible, Mrs. Plague?” cried Peter, and drew off his cap without putting it on again. “Will you be so good?” “Ah! yes!” he added thoughtfully to himself, “I have been told that you would aid me against the Magician of Glasburg.”

“Yes,” answered the Plague, “the Magician must die.”

“That will be just what I want, Mrs. Pest, but he is immortal.”

“Listen, Peter, and pay strict attention. The apple-tree guarded by the dwarf with the fiery sword is an offset of the tree, the fruit of which

changed men from immortals to mortals. The apples of this tree have still the same power, and you must see that the Magician eats of it, and then I will touch him, and he will instantly die."

"I will try," answered Peter. "But when he is dead, how shall I come at the golden cup and the diamond spear? They are in a subterranean vault that no key can unlock."

"The Laughing Flower has the power of opening all doors," answered the Plague, "and it lights up the darkness as brightly as the sun."

During this discourse they reached the other shore, and took their way towards the Glasburg.

At the entrance of Glasburg there was a great canopy, under the shade of which the giant was reposing; he was sitting cross-legged, like the rich lord of the manor who has just reaped a rich harvest, and he was smoking a golden pipe.

When he saw Peter with the lady in black coming towards him on his black colt, he cried out in an angry voice, that resounded like thunder in the mountains: "By the powers! There is Silly Peter riding on my thirteen month's colt."

"Yes, I am Silly Peter, most powerful lord under the sun," said Peter, dismounting.

“ And pray, how did you get here ? ”

“ I have done as your brother Bryak taught me. I went to the edge of the wood, and called out : —

‘ Colt so young, colt so black,
Come quick and take me on thy back.’

And the colt came directly.”

“ Then you know my brother ? ”

“ He is my master.”

“ And why has he sent you hither ? ”

“ To bring you two presents which he has just received from Ethiopia. The apple of Delight, and the virgin Meekness.”

“ If you eat the apple, your heart will all the time experience the delight which a poor man feels who suddenly discovers in his empty pockets a hundred gold pieces, and if you take the maiden into your service, there will be nothing left upon earth for you to wish for.”

“ Well, help the maiden down from the horse, and hand me the apple.” Peter reached him the apple, and went to the Plague to assist her to dismount. The giant eagerly bit the apple ; the Plague then hastened up, touched him, and he instantly fell dead to the ground.

Peter went into the palace with the Laughing

Flower in his hand. He passed through, one after another, more than fifty rooms, and came at last to the silver door. This immediately sprang open before the Laughing Flower, and there lay the golden cup and the diamond spear.

But hardly had he grasped them, when the earth heaved beneath his feet, a frightful crash was heard, the palace and the Plague had vanished together, and Peter found himself with his two treasures in the midst of a thick wood.

Nothing daunted, he travelled on, and soon reached the court of a neighboring king. On the way, however, he bought the richest garments and the finest horse that were to be found.

This king was in great distress; he was involved in a war with a powerful adversary, who had besieged him in his capital city. The enemy pressed closely upon him, there was no longer a mouthful of bread to be had in the city, and meat was not to be thought of; and in his extremity he had promised his daughter in marriage to any one who would come to his relief.

Then Peter made his appearance before the king, and said that he would rescue him.

“How can you do that?” said the king. “Our

people are but a handful ; the enemy, on the contrary, is strong, and you are but a single man."

But Peter did not allow himself to be discouraged. He placed himself at the head of the soldiers, and led on an attack. Before his diamond spear, down sank all that he touched, and if one of his party fell, he hastened to him and held the golden cup to his lips, and the dead instantly rose to life and health, and continued the combat.

At length the enemy were beaten and their whole country conquered. The king kept his promise, gave his daughter in marriage to Peter, and made him heir to his whole kingdom.

Thus did Silly Peter, whom every body regarded as a simpleton, become a great prince ; but that was because he never boasted or gave himself out for any great things, but quietly thought within himself how it would be best to act, because "DISCRETION TRANSCENDS FORCE," or "if one only begins right, one can accomplish a great deal."

THE END.

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

[illegible]

